

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE

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LEONARD HUXLEY



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MARCH 1933.

WITH NAPOLEON TO ST. HELENA.

FROM THE COMMONPLACE BOOK
OF A SHROPSHIRE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

BY RACHEL LEIGHTON.

AMONG the books lying on the Library table is a bulky volume bound in worn marble-paper boards, with frayed leather back, the leaves are of coarse blue-grey paper; it is labelled 'Newspaper Scraps, etc.' The book plate of Thomas Netherton Parker of Sweeney marks its owner.

The news cuttings commence in 1800; they continue in fair chronological sequence to 1829, for the most part they are records of local events, from local journals, but in 1814 and 1815 Mr. Parker's interests seem to widen, and the cuttings give news of the Bourbons, and the Bonapartes, of Elba, of 'Further Particulars of Princess Charlotte,' of Joanna Southcote, her last illness, and subsequent obsequies. Passing to the autumn of 1815 we find a long letter copied out in Mr. Parker's handwriting, evidently a letter which aroused great interest, as it, and its companion letter a page or two farther on, are the only 'Scraps' in manuscript contained in the book.

These letters, to 'My dear Harriet,' are transcribed with care, but the name of the writer is omitted. From internal evidence it would appear that he was an Officer of the 82nd Foot, attached to H.M.S. *Northumberland* for the voyage to St. Helena, as part of a special guard for Napoleon and his suite.

The Regimental Records of 1815 for the 82nd Foot are very sparse, and afford no clue by which such an officer can be identified, but the Regiment was at this date sailing, or under orders to sail, for the Mauritius. That the British Military and Naval Authorities were extremely nervous for the safety of their illustrious prisoner is common knowledge; the wildest rumours were current, and the Government was anxious to get the Emperor well away on the high seas with as little delay as possible. Is it so unlikely, then, that a couple of young officers, already detailed for foreign service, should be transferred at the last moment to the *Northumberland*, as extra Guards, seeing that the vessel was bound for the Cape after she had landed her precious freight at St. Helena? The

Log of the *Northumberland* confirms the happenings on board referred to in the letters, such as the mutinous conduct of the crew, the condition of the weather and so forth; in every case where a date is either given or implied, it can be verified in the Master's Log, but the Log gives no list of the regimental officers serving on board.

The letters tell their own story, simply and vividly.

How did Mr. Parker come by them? Who wrote them? The first letter posted from Madeira on or about August 22, may have reached 'My dear Harriet' towards the middle or end of September. No one of that name belonged to the family at Sweeney, but Mr. Parker was sociable, and frequently entertained his neighbours 'to dine and sleep'; moreover, his eldest son, Thomas Browne Parker, who left Eton 'for good' (according to his Diary) in March, 1815, and entered Oriel College on the 31st October of the same year, spent the summer and autumn at home. A tiny Diary entitled *Peacock's Polite Repository or Pocket Companion* also lies on the Library table, bearing on its cover his initials T. B. P. and on its pages are notes of the comings and goings in the home circle during that long vacation. 'Drove Miss H. B. and her father in the gig.' 'Miss H. B. went away, I rode half way.' 'Myttons dined here.' 'Myttons, Charltons, Corbet, here.' Again 'Myttons of Halston stayed.' 'Went to Llangollen and slept, dined with the Ladies.' 'Fished at Halston, with Mytton.' 'Ladies of Llangollen dined here.' These entries have been taken at random from the *Pocket Companion*.

'Harriet' was a favourite name of the period. Mrs. Mytton, of Halston, was Harriet Owen of Woodhouse, a neighbouring estate. Her only son, Jack Mytton (M.P. 1819-20 for Shrewsbury), famous as spendthrift, gambler, prince of sportsmen, whose popularity in his own county has never even to this day grown dim, though he died in a Debtors' Prison in 1834, married as his first wife, Harriet, daughter of Sir Tyrwhitt Jones, of Stanley Hall, Shropshire, and her mother again was Harriet Williams, of Eaton, also Shropshire. There may well have been other Harriets, 'Miss H. B.' for instance, who, with the omission of 'Miss,' is frequently referred to in the Diary. Can we suppose that the writer was a brother or near relative of one of these Harriets? Or may we search for him from among the numerous correspondents gathered into the post-bag of the Ladies of Llangollen? Did Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby carry these letters to Sweeney in order to share with Mr. and Mrs.

Parker first-hand and exciting details of the greatest event of the time ?

Be that as it may, the little Diary and 'The Newspaper Scraps' are alike silent on the point of who wrote the Letters or to whom they were addressed ; Letters which for over a century have been shut away, within the covers of a Shropshire Gentleman's commonplace Book.

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER.

'MY DEAR HARRIET,—

'I am not paying you a very high compliment in saying I only write to keep myself awake, however it is the fact & if this scrawl is a little unintelligible and unconnected you must attribute it to *circumstances being unfavourable* which is the way our french friends account for all their misfortunes ; it is my Guard and I have to sit in the Antichamber of Napoleon to prevent communication between him & the ship's crew & also to be a check on his domestics, 'tis now about one o'clock and I must keep awake till six, here I am surrounded by five of the Imperial Guards of the present day who lie snoring on the floor, the most trustworthy sleeps across the entrance of his room I suppose fearful that he might be assassinated. I assure you I am heartily sick of his presence for this duty is very severe and disagreeable there are only four of us to do it, an officer of the royal Artillery, one of the fifty third & two of us, so that we have three nights in bed and one up.—it would be nothing if it was only a common Guard but being obliged to keep awake is the disagreeable part of it, there is one consolation it will not last long.—Napⁿ. gets very sulky if he is not treated with that deference & respect he has been accustomed to & sometimes appears quite peevish & sullen, his followers the Generals pay him just the same respect as though he was still Emperor, whenever he is on deck they stand uncovered & approach him with the same respect as if he was still Emperor. Beattie my Captain was at Acre, Bonaparte learnt this in conversation with him, seemed quite pleased caught hold of his ear & gave it a good pinch which is his custom when pleased & seems to have taken a great liking to him—he breakfasts at eleven, instead of tea takes half a pint of Claret, dines at five and immediately after comes on deck for an hour (he eats very heartily and drinks about a pint of Claret) then he goes to cards, Vingt-un is the Game that is always played, he always stakes two Napoleons d'Or on a card & generally loses. He is sometimes very communicative, today he mentioned the project he had formed for invading England 1815 (*sic*) declared

it to have been his intention to have led the expedition himself & said he thought it might have succeeded, the plan was this, he sent his fleet to the West Indies for the purpose of drawing our fleets there, which it did, Lord Nelson and Sir M. Calder both following Villeneuve there. He was to return immediately to the Channel, Napⁿ. said he calculated upon Villeneuve's arrival in the Channel at least a fortnight before our troops would get back which would give him a naval superiority for a short time, his army was embarked (200,000 he says) but the plan was disconcerted by Villeneuve's going into Cadiz instead of coming to the Channel, his words were "He might as well have been in the East Indies as at Cadiz." He declared that if Villeneuve had obeyed his orders he should certainly have invaded England, be the result what it might. Bertrand is the only one that seems to feel his situation, he talks of Napⁿ. often with tears, and is always extremely agitated when conversing on the state of France, he says Napⁿ. did not calculate upon fighting the English & Prussians at Waterloo, the Prussians were beat on the 16th & they did not suppose they could have been up to take part in the battle of the 18th, he thinks they would have gained the victory if Prussians had not come up, but *circumstances were not favourable*, the French soldiers fought very well, the generals did not, I asked him what became of the french army after the battle & why they did not retreat in some kind of order, he said with a shrug "they were anihilated there were none left." Yet notwithstanding these admissions, they break out gasconading about their victories & Napⁿ's. great generalship, blame Wellington for making mistakes at Waterloo & many other things equally absurd. Bertrand & family are only going out for a short time at Nap^s particular request & then return to England to educate his children. Las Casas was an Emigrant in England ten years with the Bourbons, returned to France in 1813 & is now emigrating with Napⁿ. to St. Helena. . . . The ladies perhaps you would like better to hear of—Madame Bertrand is about five feet ten, speaks English very well and is very agreeable, the story which some of our Papers got hold of, of Bertrand going to Paris from Elba he positively denies, says he never was out of the Island till he landed in France with Napⁿ. (I am just asleep) Madame Montholon is middling size, very thin, speaks a little English, & is in very bad health. . . . This is Napⁿ's birthday he is fortyseven it was his wish to make a fête & ask all the officers to dine but living with the Admiral he could not indulge it, I must read now for I can write no more at present—

'Augt. 20th.

'I am again one of Napⁿ's attendants & shall give you a detail of what has occurred since my last sheet; We are still on our

passage to Madeira, having had a great deal of foul wind, nothing out of the ship worthy of mention has occurred, we have fallen in with two french vessels from the West Indies & one American who were not a little surprised to hear of Napⁿ's party of pleasure—he still continues to live much in the same way as he did with the exception of drinking more; sometimes a bottle of Claret at breakfast, his spirits are better, he enters into conversation on different parts of his life with great freedom, the other day he was speaking of the battle of Waterloo, he said that he had not the smallest idea of fighting on the 18th he did not suppose Wellington would have given him battle, that he so fully expected Wellington to retreat that he had not even made preparations for fighting & was a little taken by surprise being drawn into the battle “but (said he) I never was so pleased as when I found he intended to fight, I had not a doubt of annihilating his army, it was the only thing I could have wished, I expected him to abandon Flanders & fall back on the Prussians, but when I found he gave me battle singly, I was confident of his destruction, my soldiers behaved well, my Generals did not.” He says it was dusk when his army was thrown into confusion that could he have shewn himself they would have rallied & been victorious, but that the rout was so great he was carried away in the throng, he went to Paris to try to save the honor of France & the Capital, but he found he could not; *he positively asserts* that previous to the battle of Waterloo & after his return to France, Austria proposed to him to abdicate in favour of Napⁿ. 2nd & she would support him. His followers too have mentioned so many particulars respecting it that I do not doubt the fact; this proposition *had nothing* to do with the forged letter of the Duke of Bassano which they also speak of as a falsehood, that none such was shewn to him by Murat—He has been talking this evening about his turning Mahometan, said it was a long time before he could persuade them that he was a true Mussulman, “but at last I persuaded them that Mahomet was wrong in some things & I was right, & they acknowledged me to be the greater man,” says that in his retreat from Acre he lost nearly half his army; yesterday he remarked that Madame Bertrand was in much better spirits than when she attempted to drown herself, and added, “a man of *true courage* will bear up against misfortunes and *finally surmount* them, when common minds will sink under them”; he does appear to think that he has lost all chance of power; Converses sometimes on the subject of making away with himself, and calmly retrobates the idea that he should have been supposed capable of it. I know not how to describe the life we live here, though a little more settled than at first, 'tis still one of great confusion, the mess-place crowded from

morning to night, we sit down 24 to dinner in the place intended for 12, the weather begins to get very warm as we approach the tropics, I keep on the lower deck on which there are 800 men (troops & all) the heat is dreadful, but I am in very good health; the day is passed at Backgammon, Chess, & cards, it is impossible to read or write in the daytime, I therefore leave it till my guard at night.—

'The Admiral behaves very well, there is refreshment & generally a bottle of Madeira left out for the officer of the Guard, there is now one of Champagne but I have not attacked it yet. I believe the object of the Guard is to prevent communication with the crew. Napⁿ. told the Admiral that he did not doubt that he could get many to join him if he tried and indeed they are as mutinous a set of rascals as I ever heard of, though I don't think they would assist him to escape, what I am going to state (for the credit of the country) must be a secret, they mutinied & refused to get anchor up at Portsmouth, the Artillery Co^y. 33^d. & ourselves were under arms for three hours, that is untill they had sailed, about 20 of the principal seamen were seized & confined and sent away from the ship & the conduct & language of the sailors is now beyond everything, they think nothing of striking the midshipmen. The *professed* intention of the guard is lest he & his followers should get out from his cabin window into a boat which hangs close to them, & lower it down, which is bearly possible. . . .

'August 21st 2 o'clock morn^g.

'I am collecting all Napⁿ's military anecdotes for the edification of the officers of the 82nd doubtless you will see many acct^s. published of Napⁿ. in the Paper, but do not believe any that do not agree with mine, at least since he has been on board the *Northumberland*, for we all agreed at first to make up long stories about him, & write to our correspondants, I have written one or two, but mind what I write to you *is all truth*. Some anecdotes & descriptions of him comprising three or four sheets of paper were written the day before he came to us, & I should not be surprised if you were to hear from St. Helena that he was turned *quite black*.

'We have a Mulatto boy on board that we mean to shew at Madeira for the young king of Rome, he was picked up in America in a skirmish by some of our officers & is a great favourite, just four years old and will do for young Napⁿ. very well. . . .

'As the letters are to be sent into Madeira tomorrow I must finish without waiting for another nightly guard. We are not to go in ourselves though all the brigs, troopers, craft, &c. are to go there. I expect we shall be obliged to touch at the Azores for water, we are to wait at sea till the other vessels come out.

'I am sorry I shall not have an opportunity to enjoy the hospi-

talities I before experienced at Madeira, it would have been very pleasant after being so coupled up as we are, we shall also be disappointed in not shewing off our young king of Rome. . . .

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER FROM ST. HELENA, OCT. 16, 1815.

'We arrived at this barren horrid looking Island yesterday after a tedious passage of ten Weeks during which we experienced no bad weather or disagreeable heat, so far fortunate. . . .

'For the last Week we have had nothing but salt rations, & no vegetables we shall now get vegetables but for fresh meat it is out of the question, there being only five Bullocks on the Island, a ship sails tomorrow for the Cape of Good Hope to procure Bullocks & other necessaries. . . .

'The island produces vegetables (though not in abundance) such as Potatoes, Carrots, Cabbages, Turnips & lots of water cresses. There is no fruit now but in the season they say it produces Oranges, Lemons, bad Apples & Pears. Shaddocks, Melons & a few Grapes. Poultry is very scarce, a chicken sells for a Dollar which goes here for 5s. 9d. Beef as I before said is not to be got. Mutton is brought here from the cape and is 2s. a pound, Pork is rather more plentiful. Above St. James Town which is on the N.W. side of the Island, the Hills rise to the height of 2000 feet, crowned with batteries, pointing directly down into the Harbour, if it may be so called, for it is nothing but an open Roadstead, but as the wind always blows from the S.E. the anchorage is covered by the Island. . . .

'Napoleon has been in pretty good health and spirits during the voyage he converses on any subject without the least hesitation, for the edification of Politicians. I must of course tell you what he said on the subject. . . .

'First then the poisoning his sick at Acre or Jaffa, he says that when he first heard the accusation he was astonished that a transaction which was so public throughout his army could have been so much misrepresented—that on finding it necessary to retreat from Acre he had about 40 there, in the last stage of the Plague, he called a consultation of Medical officers, it was their unanimous opinion none of them could recover or live 48 hours. It was the custom of the Turks to mutilate all Frenchmen (sick or not) who fell into their hands & otherwise treat them very barbarously; to prevent this he put the question in a council of War whether it would not be an act of humanity to put an end to their sufferings rather than leave them to the Turks, for to carry them with the army was impossible, they could with great difficulty carry their other sick with them & would have exposed the whole army to the Plague. The council of war rejected the

proposal. We remained on the spot with the army 24 hours longer than he expected & left a division with orders to march 24 hours after him, that they might die before the Turks could molest them & when the last division moved, only 2 remained alive and they at the point of death. He says the whole army knew, and he avows that he proposed to poison them, but it was rejected. He declares solemnly that had he been in their situation he would have preferred it, to being left to the Turks, but that it did not take place. Beattie the Captain of my company was on the spot at the time & in following the retreat came to the Hospital, saw the dead bodies but said they had not the least idea of their being poisoned till the accusation was made twelve months after. Of the Duke D'Engheim he said he had most circumstantial evidence that he & the Duke de Berri with others were engaged in a conspiracy to assassinate him, that had [not] he arrested [*sic*] him his own life would have been the sacrifice; that he considered himself as the head of the French Nation & a design against his life, treason, that the Duke D'Engheim had come to the borders of France for the purpose of conducting the plot & at the very time he was arrested, the Duke de Berri was within a few miles of Paris—he discovered the Plot first by a person lately arrived from England.—He appears to consider the execution of the Duke D'Engheim as the common course of justice, and conversed on it without the least embarrassment. . . . Of Pichegru, Moreau & Gorges, their conspiracy was discovered by an Emigré Surgeon, who was arrested in Paris & condemned as a Spy. That they had been in Paris some time without its being known, that Moreau drove out in his carriage every day & upon the surgeon's declaration he was taken to the public drive, where he pointed out a carriage in which was Moreau, the plan was, Moreau to be first consul, Pichegru second, & Gorges third, the two latter were not satisfied with this arrangement which led to the Surgeon's arrest & discovered the conspiracy. Denies Pichegru having been put to death, asks what motive he could have for it, when he was already condemned by a public tribunal. Of Captain Wright he professes to know nothing says it was of too little consequence to come before him, and if it did take place must have been Fouché's act. His design in penetrating to Moscow so late in the year, was not in expectation of remaining there, he says he expected to be able to reach Petersburg before the winter set in, the Frost commencing so much earlier than usual, he considers the sole cause of the Destruction of his army & his design of getting to Petersburg before Winter was frustrated by his being longer in reaching Moscow than he calculated upon. He says he suffered much from the cold in his retreat although wrapt up in Furs. All the Gen^{ls} were in the

Russian retreat. They say their consternation at finding Moscow in flames was very great, the retreat was dreadful beyond everything, they say they saw several of the soldiers frozen with their muskets in their Hands, and some instances of men dropping whilst raising an arm to the head frozen instantaneously, the limb remaining raised, they suffered more from the leading divisions in the retreat, as they set fire to every town & village through which they passed, which left the rear divisions neither fuel nor cover when they came up. In short their descriptions of the retreat exceed anything I could have believed, they seem to have lost nearly three hundred thousand in Prisoners and all. I have dined three times with Napoleon and always sat directly opposite to him at table, I cannot say I think his manners have much of that elegance you would expect from one of his *ci-devant* high rank, they are rather vulgar than otherwise & he has a particular disagreeable grunt when he does not quite understand what you say which answers to our interjection "ha!" desiring a repetition. He converses without the least reserve, but not at table with the Frenchmen & takes no more notice of the Ladies than if they were a hundred miles off, (as good a comparison as I dare make) I have only seen him speak once to Madame Bertrand at Table, and seldom elsewhere. Bertrand is a good kind of man but I think credulously disposed. Montholon is a man of whom one can give no Character he is like the common run. Gorgaud is a vain boasting Frenchman. Napoleon landed here on the 17th he is at a house in the Country until the one he is to inhabit is ready for his reception. The expense of his establishment will not be very trifling, his yesterday's dinner cost eighty pounds and it cannot be expected that he can get one hereafter at a cheaper rate.'

WILL AMERICA PUT THE WORLD IN THE MELTING-POT ?

BY C. L. HARGREAVES.

MR. HOOVER's reply about the debt question must have made many people despair of saving our civilisation. When I first wrote these words, the outlook seemed so black that I chose as my title 'America puts the world in the melting-pot.' But the change of attitude evidenced by Mr. Roosevelt's invitation to send a British delegation to discuss debts seems to me to justify the change of title.

To us Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt is an unknown quantity. He is only a distant cousin of the former President, and has a very different personality. Indeed, he is more or less of an invalid. It has even been suggested that because of his health he may be reluctant to undertake the task—arduous even for a very strong man—of a second term of office as President of the United States; that in that case, he might be able to free himself from the fatal shackles of democracy, the voters' views; that therefore he would be able to act purely for his country's good, and so might accomplish great things, such as the usual leader of a democracy can never do. But it is doubtful if he would ever be able to do this in the face of the opposition which he must meet from the leaders of his party. For it must not be forgotten that the President of the United States is the head of a party as well as the head of a State. This does not mean that he can be removed from office like a prime minister. Whatever the voters do, or even whichever way Congress votes, he must constitutionally remain head of the executive for four years from March 4. Congress is only a legislative body. This separation of the executive and legislative functions is due to the framers of the American Constitution having taken as their model the theory and not the practice of the British Constitution.

So there seem to be some grounds for hoping that the beginning of December, 1932, was the darkest hour before the dawn. I had a long talk very recently with an Englishman who had just landed on his return after twelve years' residence in the United States. Before he left this country he had been an engineer, and at first he tried engineering over there, but soon settled down in the motor

trade in Florida. There he survived with difficulty natural and economic hurricanes. In the land-boom period he made a lot of money, and was probably, like everyone else in Florida, momentarily quite a rich man. Wiser than most of them, who soon lost more than they had made, he put a good deal of it in the bank. The bank survived the tornado of 1928, which blew most things away, but recently it followed the example of so many American banks, and closed its doors. He has therefore returned much richer in experience, but little richer in cash. The foregoing events may have coloured his outlook on conditions in America, but at any rate his conclusions are roughly as follows: 'There is no stability in the United States. The result is that they have got into a terrible darned mess, and before they get out, things are likely to be worse, but there's one thing that they are going to have to realise, although they don't know it yet, and that is that they must cry quits over the Debts question.'

This realisation is far from being attained; but fortunately the payment by the British on December 15 has created a favourable atmosphere, and thanks mostly to that, the miracle may yet be achieved. There are still many Americans who say that, if Europe would only pay her debts, there would be plenty of money to pay the unemployed. They make the common mistake of forgetting that people cannot be fed on gold. If they could, there would not now be many millions of unemployed in America, some of whom are really on the brink of starvation. The police would not be busy keeping on the move the armies which roam from one town to any other which they are not forbidden to enter. These armies are driving an ever-increasing number of people to the realisation that something must be done, and the first form that something will probably take will be the remission of the debts. There will doubtless be many more somethings after that. Nevertheless, the present position is a great step forward when one remembers that non-cancellation was one of the chief platforms of both parties in the recent contest for the presidency. And this improvement is largely due to Britain having paid when some other countries did not. What happened on December 15 put war debts on the map for the average American. The discussions which it caused may account for the change of attitude. They are beginning to learn something about the British point of view, which, treating war debts as it does from the purely business standpoint, should appeal to them.

So, although I do not aspire to join in the chorus of those who have a solution to offer, I should like to explain a little about the American political landscape as it appears to an Englishman who pays not infrequent visits to North America. It is difficult for people in England to realise anything about the politics of the United States. Even more difficult is it for the inhabitant of the Middle West of America to realise anything at all about Europe. Yet one often hears people ask impatiently how Americans can be so stupid in their dealings with other countries. To start with, when these people say 'Americans' they are not at all clear what 'Americans' means. They do not know enough about them to distinguish one type from another. They have seen a few individuals of a type common to all nations, whose object, once they are out of their own country, seems to be to show how much they prefer their own country to the one they are visiting. If I can help to remove any of these prejudices, I shall be satisfied.

Now, while agreeing in some respects with the trite remark that there is no American nation, I disagree strongly in others. There is a definite American mentality. It is partly due to the reasons that impelled their European forebears to emigrate, and partly to climate. The United States are divided into four main groups by climate: these four are the East, the West, the South, and the Middle West or centre. Let us remember that the Middle West, by reason of its size, plays a large part in politics. Then let us think what the Middle West is: an enormous wheat-growing country, stretching in flat monotony for over 1,000 miles, the nearest sea being yet another thousand miles distant. Add to this a climate of extremes, and the fact that a farm may be many miles from its nearest neighbour, which, in winter, very likely means that it is impossible to reach that neighbour for weeks on end, and it is not very surprising that the inhabitants of that important part of the country take a parochial view of politics.

We English are parochial enough in our views, and we have a long tradition of political life behind us; in fact it has been said that we are the only truly politically-minded people in the world, and even then we leave a great deal to be desired. We have every opportunity for being internationally-minded. Owing, alas! to our overpopulation there is never any lack of neighbours with whom to discuss politics. We are a part—perhaps a rather independent part, but still a part—of Europe: and yet how difficult it is for us to see the point of view of any other nation in Europe!

London is far the most international city in the world. It is easier there than anywhere else to buy goods from, and to get real information about, any other country in the world. Yet what does the average Londoner know about America, or even Australia, much less their politics? As a matter of fact, I am afraid I might say that he does not care.

Small wonder then that the Middle West American is in a state of abysmal ignorance about Europe. He may not even have heard of 'Youroap,' but if he has it conveys very little to him. He probably does not even know that it is to Europe that he sells his wheat, and therefore does not have the glimmering of an idea that if he makes Europe pay war debts, Europe will not be able to buy his crop. It may be even more complicated than this, for he may not have heard that Europe cannot pay, but simply that Britain will not. Now, Britain in all probability represents to him the rich bully. So he is only too delighted to think that Britain will be impoverished in order to pay some of his taxes for him. This would no doubt be an excellent scheme if it did not in actual life result in his being ruined, first, foremost, and altogether. Anyone who expects a sudden change in American public opinion about war debts is therefore living in a fool's paradise.

The basic factor in the American character is individualism. By that I mean, 'Each man for himself, and to hell with the rest.' This is a fixed idea which Europeans must take into account in all their dealings with America and Americans. The failure to do so has caused much ill-feeling in the past, and will again in the future. Ingrained in the American, this characteristic can be traced back to the very beginnings of American life. Apart from a few communities in New England, it was the spirit of the first settlers: it was intensified in the days of the pioneers in the great trek westwards: and remains the outstanding trait of the American of to-day. Most emigrants went to America because they wanted either to get away from the restrictions under which they lived, or to make money. This means that they were naturally restless (and perhaps inclined to impatience with the law): having reached America, they found a climate which stimulated their restlessness. In this way grew their individualism, the best-known expression of which is Washington's famous warning against entangling alliances—the sane spirit which prompted withdrawal from the League of Nations.

Thus also arose the spirit of criticism of the old world. Brought

up under entirely different conditions, the new generations found the inhibitions of the old world even more ridiculous than had their fathers. The result has been that Americans have continually advanced theories for the regeneration of Europe, which have been impossible of achievement because they did not take into account the hard facts of European existence. And the Europeans, rather annoyed at being preached to by 'upstart relations,' with an air of detached superiority, treated their proposals with contumely, and did not take the trouble to sift the good from the bad. This aloofness might be put down to politics, and anyway nations are not good at 'getting together.' But it is not only political, for then you would expect the business men and bankers to 'get together.' They seldom do, however, unless perhaps a visiting business man from Europe is able to overcome their reluctance to meet round a board table. Each man for himself, particularly when applied to banking and finance, does not help to solve the present crisis.

Nevertheless, to take one favourite theme, looking at it from the point of view of a visitor from Mars, it is difficult to see why the nations of Europe cannot live together just as peaceably as the men of those same nations do in America. Why can millions of Frenchmen and millions of Germans live as friends in America and not in Europe? After all, is there really any greater racial and cultural difference between them than between the English and the Scots, who have now lived in peace for three hundred years? Must we all live in this state of national suspicion and hatred, when the advantages of the other method are so obvious? Cannot the European be persuaded to try to assimilate what is good in the would-be teachings of their self-appointed mentors, and not treat the whole thing as impudence? Nobody can be surprised that Americans, seeing only their own conditions, turn their backs in disgust on Europe, which only makes it less likely that Europe will pay attention to their suggestions. So the vicious circle of antagonism goes on because we, like the Americans, only see our own side of the question. Europeans often say that the Americans should reform their own house before starting to lecture. But that is not the point. Because they tolerate some abuses, it is no reason why we should encourage others, and furthermore refuse their help in stamping out our own.

Admittedly they have an outlook on crime which we cannot understand. Last summer a film called *Scarface*, afterwards to be

seen in London, was released in New York. The first day that picture was shown it was practically impossible to get in. Finally we did get some seats for the 11.30 p.m. performance. After midnight the price of seats is reduced, and for the 1.30 performance there was a regular free fight. The four six-foot-six chuckers-out were entirely unable to deal with the crowd, which simply surged into the theatre, which I would almost have paid to keep out of. My friends, respectable Anglo-Saxon Americans, thought it a wonderful picture, and were full of praise. I confess I thought it simply revolting: but then I have a special dislike for murder. Still, I suppose that is merely a matter of habit. We all got quite used to murder and dead men lying about in the War. But it never ceases to astonish me that the Americans put up with flagrant crime. They make no real effort to stamp it out: they simply accept it. The people you discuss it with put it down to the fact that there are so many of the riff-raff of Europe who emigrated from an inherent love of lawlessness, and regard a bandit's life as the normal way of living, that it cannot be eradicated. When one comes to examine this statement it becomes clear that it is very largely an excuse, and that the real reason is that there is so little sense of civic or public responsibility on America.

Probably this sense can only grow up under an aristocracy, and America has destroyed hers. Democracy has nearly destroyed ours. Let us see that the same fate does not befall us. In the Southern States there are traces of public spirit, but since 1865 the Northern States have been the predominant partners, and they were always anti-aristocratic. One of the results is the lamentable failure of Congress, because practically no members are disinterested enough to be working for the good of the whole nation. Another result is that there is no class in America to set a standard, and, however Victorian and snobbish that may sound, that is a necessary preliminary to orderly government. The American standard has become business; not public business, well-conducted business, or even good business: just business. An American once remarked to me that he considered a certain family America's finest family because, although they have made countless millions, each generation goes back into the business and makes more, instead of being content to spend it. That view of what constitutes a fine family is very generally held. It carries with it no obligation to the state or the public.

The same independent spirit animates the young workers. It

causes a feeling of self-confidence which often annoys the Englishman. But it is only the pioneer spirit. For nearly three centuries of American life, if a thing had to be done, a man had to do it for himself, or it was not done. So the young man to-day does not hesitate to take on any job. A young painter, with whom I had several talks, told me how he started on his own. He was working for a firm, when he heard of a man who wanted his house decorated. This meant leaving the firm, and starting in by himself. He went to see the man, who described what he wanted. The work was quite easy until it came to the entrance hall. This the owner wanted painted in coloured graining. He asked the boy if he could do this; the latter unhesitatingly said 'Yes,' whereupon the owner gave him the job. Charlie, as we will call the painter, had, as a matter of fact, never done graining before, but he had seen it done, and that was enough.

The morning his job started Charlie was up early and at the house by seven. He went straight to the entrance-hall closet (closet in America means a large hanging cupboard), and started practising his graining in there. He went on for hours, and it would not come right. He knew the owner would come round that morning to see how he was getting on, and if he could not get it right before he came, he feared he would lose his job for which he had left his firm. At last it suddenly came to him. He shut the closet door, and had just started doing the graining in the entrance hall when the owner arrived. Fortunately the latter never opened the closet door and saw the mess inside, so Charlie kept his job.

He was then twenty-two: he is now twenty-four, married, and a father. He is smart, nice looking, well educated, and excellent company. He was out of work last winter, but in the spring got employment again. He told me: 'I only got the job by cutting my rates to the bone. I am only being paid seven dollars a day, which is about half what I ought to get. It's a disgrace to work for so little, and if I hadn't a wife, I would never have taken it on.' . . . There it is again, that spirit of independence, that idea that it is rather degrading to work for anyone else, and certainly so, except for a high wage. Rather than work for what represents to-day nearly £2, because he thought he ought to get £4 a day, my young friend would have remained out of a job; and in America that means pretty fair misery because there is no dole.

Having taken on his job, he did it well, working early and late, Saturdays included, and as a result got several other jobs at the

same rate. No nonsense about trades union rates or hours. For this same individualism accounts for the failure of trades unionism in the United States, which always seemed to me so unaccountable until I grasped the reason.

Individualism, of course, is an excellent thing in moderation, but it can be, and in America is, carried too far. It is due to an excess of it that American children are brought up on principle that nobody must ever say 'Don't' to them. The result is that the boys, when they first go out into the world, have to take many hard knocks: but they eventually get the corners knocked off. The girls, on the other hand, who do not go to work, often never get them rubbed off, and this may account partly for the many matrimonial changes that they make, and for their often discontented appearance in spite of their unequalled charm. And yet much of the charm of American youth is due to this very independence.

The European nations must make allowance for this individualistic outlook. 'Getting together' has never been particularly noticeable in Europe, until perhaps recently. But it is absurd to expect, as most European nations seem to do, that whenever they are in difficulties the United States is only waiting, like a doctor, to be called in for consultation. And expectations do not stop there. 'America should turn a sympathetic ear to all appeals for help; America should do this or that——' Why should she? Her tradition of each man for himself is the very opposite of the idea of screaming for help. It also engenders a contempt for servility which is the besetting sin of England in her relations with Washington. The Americans feel that if a man cannot stand on his own legs, he cannot be worth much. Let us therefore show first of all that we can and do stand on our own legs, and that we want others to walk and work with us as equals. Thus in time we may convince the individualists that co-operation can also be valuable.

What I have said above is not an apologia for the Americans. It is merely a statement of facts, and it is only by realising facts that the world gets on. What is necessary is that we should take up our position quite firmly. We must not play the poor relation, or even the indulgent grandmother. Those two attitudes have done incalculable damage to Anglo-American relations already. We should state our case in a way easily understood by the American people, and see that that public, and particularly the Middle West, gets to hear our point of view. They are not stupid nor

ungenerous, but we must help ourselves before they will help us. It is no doubt very exasperating to find that after all our sacrifices America is prepared to jeopardise white civilisation rather than sacrifice a few paltry millions, which in fact she can never hope to collect. But exasperation does not help. Let us face the facts firmly, and we may again save a tottering world.

LOVE THE SIREN.

SWEET are thy arms outstretched, O love the siren !
What though the breakers' rock-spurned swirl hath driven
Those ships to hell that ventured near thy heaven,
Fearless, fresh craft make for thy coasts of iron.
—Sweet are thy arms outstretched, O love the siren.

Sweet thy seductive voice, divine perdition !
The mariner, plunging in the boiling surges,
—Lured by thy cheating chant of bowers elysian—
Sinks in the tortured seas whence none emerges.
—Sweet thy seductive voice, divine perdition,
And sweet thy arms outstretched, O love the siren.

AVIS.

CHARITY.

BY JAMES W. BEST.

INSIDE Viceregal Lodge, where he was hemmed in by cohorts of scarlet-coated attendants and shepherded through long passages by quiet A.D.C.'s, the Munshi was a humble man, realising his comparative unimportance in that splendid household. Once past the magnificent sentries at the gate he held his head high. Did he not instruct the Viceroy of the King-Emperor? Had he not His Excellency's private ear? He was an important man, he might make history, and did so in a small way, as this story will tell.

The Munshi was patient as all good teachers are.

'No, Your Excellency, "Ladka."'

'Ladka,' repeated the Viceroy.

'Your Excellency pronounced the middle letter as a "D," it should approximate to an "R."'

'Larrrrka,' said the Viceroy, who was Scotch and liked to pronounce an R as if he meant it. 'How's that?' he continued.

The Munshi sighed.

'The letter is really a "D." The word should be pronounced thus—"Ladka."'

The Viceroy tried, only to fail as dismally as ninety-nine Europeans out of a hundred who attempt to tackle this difficulty. Most languages have one or two words that discover the foreigner. Here was one of them.

'I don't understand. The letter is a "D," you say yourself it is a "D," but that it is pronounced as an "R," or rather as a "D" with a bias towards an "R"; then why not call it an "R" and be honest?'

'It is somewhat different,' answered the Munshi in confusion at his pupil's outburst, 'it is, in short, English "R" approximating to "D."'

'Larrrrdka,' said the Viceroy viciously.

Perhaps it was fortunate that at this moment an A.D.C. should enter the room. The Munshi rose without protest, knowing that his time was up, greater matters of State claiming his pupil's attention.

Delhi dur ist—it's a far cry to Delhi—is as true a saying now as it was in the old days. To the District Officer responsible for the

well-being of India, Delhi and Simla are indeed a long way off, and their inhabitants unapproachable in their high places ; names in the newspapers, great ones it is true, but names only, not persons. They that bear the burden and heat of the day in the plains are apt to look upon those connected with the Central Government as souls departed this life—men whose real work on earth is done—a memory in districts where they once served.

And the farthest away of all those dwelling in the Olympian heights is His Excellency the Viceroy, which is as it should be, for the man who holds the destinies of some three hundred millions of people cannot be treated as those of common clay. Thus it is that communications with His Excellency must be made through heads of departments, governors of provinces, or private secretaries dressed in the dignity of tail coats. Yet here was a Viceroy who wished to learn the language of the common people so that he could converse, if needs be, with the lowest in the land. So the day came when His Excellency had learnt enough of the vernacular to hold an intelligent conversation with a cooly working in his garden, and the services of the learned Munshi were dispensed with.

For this Viceroy was one of the greatest that has served India. He was a man of learning, liberal views, and sufficiently strong character to overthrow many of the conservative ideas which had been handed down from the days of John Company. He was a man who meant to have things done differently.

One of his pet schemes was to establish hospitals suitable for India's masses in the headquarters of all the districts of the country. If there were Civil Surgeons, and His Excellency knew that such were employed and paid for, then let them practise their art of healing on the suffering masses of India, and God knows there are plenty of them. Here was scope for his well-known drive and initiative. So, beautifully worded letters written in the best Oxford style were sent from the Secretariat to the provinces. There they added suitable endorsements and sent copies on to the Commissioners of divisions, who cursed and forwarded them to the Deputy Commissioners of districts for action, where, as is always the case, something had to be done about it. Beyond a hint at charity, little was said by Simla about the necessary funds ; minor details, it was said, must be left to local committees, which actually comprise a membership of one—the Deputy Commissioner. The idea came from Simla, that was enough, at any rate for Simla. After the posting of the beautifully drafted letter, the highbrow members

of the Imperial Secretariat passed weary hands across tired brows, thanked God that the matter was off their hands, fingered the tape that bound the other files, and turned their thoughts to the autumnal move to Delhi.

Delhi dur ist!

Not so the Deputy Commissioners of districts. The Secretariat letters only began their troubles. The first difficulty was to find money with which to build the hospitals, the next, and a greater one, was to induce patients to go into them. However, many a great man hides in the obscurity of an Indian district; the Deputy Commissioner of Chitalpur, who was one of them, could do much that would defeat ordinary folk. He had the loyal and able support of the District Superintendent of police, named Peel, and a hard-headed Scotch doctor who was Civil Surgeon of the district. Hardy, the D.C., a well-read scholar and mathematician, administered the law; Peel, the policeman, strong and tenacious as a steel rat-trap, reckless of his own life as he was careful of those of his charges, represented order; and MacNee, the Civil Surgeon, madly keen on his work, had the heartbreaking job of looking after the sanitation of the district. Each had a task that would make many a lesser man's hair turn grey. There was no chaplain in the station, perhaps it was as well; loyalty towards one another and a strong sense of humour saved their souls. Which is the secret of Indian administration.

Chitalpur, the headquarters of the district of that name, is a town of some fifty thousand inhabitants, most of whom are massed like maggots in as smelly a collection of mean huts as it is possible for the most enthusiastic slum reformer to dream of in his worst nightmares. In accordance with modern requirements there is an up-to-date water supply as well as sanitary arrangements of a sort.

The water supply was appreciated.

Early one morning, Hardy, the D.C., accompanied by MacNee, rode his flea-bitten arab down the main street of the town. He was a good-looking man, clean-shaven with a merry twinkle in his eye that relieved his seriously lined face of harshness; moreover, he sat his horse well. As he rode down the street men salaamed, some women stared, a few smiled, but most turned their faces respectfully away after the manner of the East. There was a horrid glare and a mixture of smells baffling to refined nostrils. The holy scent of incense which came from the temples in the still morning air was recognisable and indeed pleasant compared with

the confusion of other stinks and stenchs of less certain origin. A party of sweepers, with an eye on the approaching head of the district, was working with so zealous an energy that it was difficult to see them through the halo of surrounding dust. As Hardy and the doctor arrived on the scene of unhealthy activity the head sweeper suddenly realised their presence, and stopped work in confusion—a good piece of acting that deceived none.

‘What an atmosphere!’ breathed Hardy through the handkerchief that he held to his face.

‘Yes,’ coughed the doctor, ‘it would kill most Europeans to live in this, as it does the Indians. We cannot do anything of real use here without starting a riot. Give me a box of matches, and a free hand for half an hour and I could do more good than I normally can in a year, but you won’t allow anything so practical. In any case these conditions keep the population of the country within reasonable limits.’

‘I suppose so,’ replied Hardy, as he lit a cigar, ‘let’s get out of it.’

They soon reached the outskirts of the town where dwelt those in better circumstances. Here, instead of being closely jammed together as in the poorer parts of the bazaar, each house was surrounded by a pleasant garden. Most of the dwellings were occupied by money-lenders—*banias*—who had grown fat on the lending of money at exorbitant rates of interest to the hardworking cultivators of the district. One of these houses was glaringly conspicuous, it positively hurt to look at it. Hardy’s pony, normally a quiet creature, shied at the gates. It was the best house in Chitalpur, three stories high, deep blue in colour, extravagantly ornamented outside, and enclosed by a high wall; its ornate gates, through which it was possible for the public to view part of the garden, gave an indication of the glories within. To the Europeans the taste was awful, to the Indian the splendour was a wonder. Blue, yellow and white bricks do not blend well with golden gates and bright red railings and a background of deep green of mango groves.

‘Whose house is that?’ asked the doctor as he pointed at the monstrosity.

‘It belongs to Seth Babu Lal,’ replied Hardy.

‘A pretty wealthy man, I should imagine.’

‘Yes,’ Hardy said, ‘I wish I knew his income. I am quite sure that he does not pay his fair share of income tax.’

Hardy was right, Seth Babu Lal was a very wealthy man, the

number of his clients was large, his net widespread. Moreover, his business methods were sound and simple. At the time of borrowing, a hundred per cent. interest is not considered seriously by the hard-pressed cultivator with land ready for sowing and many mouths to feed. Nor did the wily *bania* press for early repayment of the loan, he could be reasonable. Safe with the debtor's signature on the bond, he allowed the debt to accumulate at compound interest. When it had grown to four times its original amount he made a demand for the interest and on the usual plea for mercy, he granted an extension of time for the recovery of the capital—at the same rate of interest of course—he didn't believe in killing the goose that laid the golden eggs. The Indian cultivator does not yield gracefully, most money-lenders having huge bad debts to write off. It was in the gentle art of persuasion that the wily Seth excelled.

The people of the Chitalpur district are a timid race of slight build, almost dwarfs beside the Pathans of the Frontier. The latter are rude folk compared with the people of the plains, easy to anger and quick with a blow. Seth Babu Lal employed two of them. These men whose fierce aspect was enhanced by their strange baggy trousers were the *bania's* bullies and debt collectors. They knew their job and did it well.

Hence the palace in which he dwelt.

Now the wily money-lender kept two separate books of accounts. One was a straightforward and accurate record of all his transactions, which he kept very private. The other set of books, the subject of much anxious care, showed just enough profit to satisfy the income-tax collector without rousing his suspicions.

Realising that it is good business to treat his bullies well, the *bania* received faithful service in return until one day at about the time that we see Hardy and the doctor looking at the *bania's* house, the two ruffians were visited by a fellow-clansman from the other side of the frontier. A long-standing blood feud was ripe for settlement, loyalty to the clan demanded some sort of assistance. Money would help to provide the necessary arms and ammunition, so the two Pathans approached the money-lender with the view to obtaining a loan. Seth Babu Lal knew well that once they crossed the frontier with his money he would be very lucky if he ever saw it again. Having no intention of being spoiled like the Egyptians, he refused the loan, and since the frontier is a very long way off and British justice is sometimes swift, he was not murdered but lived to suffer a subtler revenge.

After the two officers had passed the vulgar monstrosity of the house, Hardy turned to his companion.

'I wish I could get a subscription for the hospital out of the fellow.'

'Who?' said the doctor, whose thoughts had wandered.

'Why, the money-lender, of course.'

'Have you tried him?'

'Yes, and the old liar says that he is a poor man.'

The doctor grunted. He was keen and a little ambitious. He repeated to his companion his views on the tremendous amount of work that was waiting to be done if they could only get the hospital built.

'Yes, yes,' Hardy answered, 'I know, but we can do nothing without the cash.'

'Oh, you have ways of getting it.'

'Yes, there are ways, of course, for those not too careful with their consciences, but I will have no hand in the sale of honours.'

'But there are lots of wealthy men about.'

'There are, but they will not subscribe.'

After they had breakfasted together, the doctor went off to his bungalow and Hardy prepared himself for the weary business of listening to a succession of carefully prepared witnesses in Court.

An orderly announced that two Pathans claimed audience.

'Let them come,' said Hardy.

They approached respectfully and salaamed.

'What do you want?' asked Hardy.

One of them held out some books of accounts. 'From Seth Babu Lal,' he said. Then the two men turned away and were no more heard of this side of the frontier.

Hardy soon found from a brief glance at the books that they were made out in a script unknown to him, so he took them to Court where he handed them over to an assistant whose hobby was a study of Oriental languages. The books proved interesting, more especially to the inspector of taxes.

While Seth Babu Lal was continuing his search for the missing books which involved a thorough spring cleaning of his house, certain cultivators were called to the Deputy Commissioner's Court. Normally this would mean a very careful preparation of what each man was to say without regard for the truth. There was no need for any such caution on this occasion because they had no idea how they were going to be questioned. They were certainly uneasy

while they spoke together outside the Court waiting for their names to be called. Nothing serious happened, however, their land revenue was not to be raised, they were accused of no crime, nor would their presence be required as witnesses in a big case. They were merely asked a few simple questions about the sums which they had paid to Seth Babu Lal during the last few years. There was no need to tell lies, in fact the Sahib had told them so; he seemed to be a kind Sahib with a merry twinkle in his eye and they told him the truth, glad of a little sympathy in those hard times.

'This money-lender is a shark,' said Hardy to his head clerk.

'Yes, your honour. Somewhat rapacious,' he added.

The Inspector of Taxes agreed.

Next day the money-lender himself was summoned. He felt uneasy. Summonses should be initiated by him—that was the normal course of events—he did not like the present procedure, why should he be called? But he went. He knew the consequences of disobedience only too well.

He was given a chair in Hardy's room, where, as is the custom, he passed the time of day in a polite discussion on the prospect of the crops while he wondered what on earth the interview was to be about. At last they came to the point.

'I think that you pay income tax?' Hardy asked.

'Your honour knows that I am a poor man with low income,' he smirked.

'Still, you pay,' persisted Hardy.

'Certainly, your honour.'

'On what amount?'

The money-lender mentioned the sum, which was not a large one.

'The Inspector of Taxes has seen my books,' continued the man, 'and can verify that I have given him a correct return of my income.'

'Quite,' said Hardy, 'I have seen your books too.'

The careful Seth felt happier, he did not know that Hardy had seen his unofficial books.

'It has been suggested to me,' continued the Deputy Commissioner, 'that the books shown to the inspector do not show all your transactions.'

'Your honour,' said the now-uneasy man, 'this is gross slander.'

'Did Rampershad pay you a hundred and thirty rupees last year?'

'Certainly not,' said the indignant money-lender. 'I do not know the man.'

'Then he owes you nothing?'

'Nothing, your honour.'

'Good,' continued Hardy, 'then in that case you will have no objection to signing this paper, which I will witness, that you absolve him of all debts due to you?'

This was awful, terrible. The wretched man perspired in his agitation. Giving money away! He had never contemplated anything so frightful.

Hardy continued:

'Here are some more, Narain Das of Amgaon, Mattra Pershad of Pipalghota, Ambika Pershad, Koitor Gond, and many others who say they have paid you money and owe you still more. According to these men's statements, which I gather from you are lies, your income must greatly exceed that which you have declared to the inspector. I notice that none of these transactions are shown in your return.'

The man looked at Hardy in horror, speechlessly stared at his tormentor like the victim of a snake that dares not run or move, but stands motionless, fascinated by the terror of a fate made certain by his own cowardice.

'However,' continued Hardy mercilessly, 'no doubt you will sign these papers so that I can tell these poor men that they are mistaken and that they owe you nothing. There must be others labouring under a similar delusion, but all will be well, the news of their absurd mistakes will soon spread, and we shall have many people reporting their alleged debts and payments.'

The horror of the situation in which the wretched *bania* found himself deprived him of the power to speak. He could hardly think, but he realised very clearly that he had either to forgive his debtors or pay up income tax with many arrears and even possibly be prosecuted and fined.

Hardy, usually a merciful man, watched him with an amused twinkle in his eye as he gave the wretch time to collect his wits. There could be little doubt which was the better course for the old sinner. Far better to pay the Government. There would be more left. He threw himself on to the ground and grasped the embarrassed Hardy round the ankles.

'Your Honour. My Father. My Mother. Protector of the Poor. King of Kings. Have mercy!' he whined.

Hardy wondered, as he fidgeted his feet in embarrassment, how much mercy this same man who now crawled at his feet had shown to his many ruined debtors using those same words of appeal.

'Get up!' he said, curtly.

The man stood weeping in front of him. He was like a worm that expects to feel the hook as it blithers in messy moisture.

'So far as this present year is concerned, you will pay the tax to the full amount. You are of course liable to a prosecution and fine as well as the payment of arrears, but Government is merciful.'

He picked up a copy of the printed appeal for subscriptions to the hospital fund.

'Perhaps you have not received a copy of this appeal. We need money for the new hospital.'

Hardy rang a bell and the man was shown out.

The Deputy Commissioner laughed.

There is no record of what happened when the money-lender returned next day, nor of a prosecution.

During the next few days certain quiet men of sympathetic manner visited the villages asking cultivators what sums they owed the different money-lenders and what they had paid them in the past. The information was given only too willingly. Later a clerk in the district office tabulated the results of their enquiries. Peel, the policeman, whose business it was to know everything, was puzzled.

'There are men going round the villages,' he told Hardy in the club, 'asking all sorts of questions about payments to money-lenders. I don't understand it.'

'You leave them alone,' was the reply, 'they are all right.'

'How is the appeal for the hospital getting on?' interrupted the Civil Surgeon.

'Surprisingly well,' was the reply; 'I think that you will get your hospital.'

Such indeed was the case. After the failure of the first appeal, the second invitation for help produced a response beyond the most optimistic expectations. The germ of generosity was unaccountably loose and in a virulent form seemed to have infected all the money-lenders in the district. Men who had spent their lives in taking their hard-earned money from the poor set an example in generosity that was the envy of the province. The Civil Surgeon was radiant, never had he dreamed of such a result. He already had a dispensary of course, now he was to have a real hospital.

Chitalpur was held up as an example to the rest of the province. His Excellency the Governor wrote to Hardy conveying his heartfelt thanks to the generous subscribers and expressed a gracious

wish to lay the foundation-stone in person. To mark the appreciation, the Deputy Commissioner invited the donors to a garden party where he conveyed to them His Excellency's gracious message with special mention of Seth Babu Lal whose lead had produced such magnificent results. Everybody was pleased. Government helped with a grant of land for the building, and a public holiday was fixed for the day on which His Excellency would lay the foundation-stone. Seth Babu Lal even hoped that his name might figure in the next honours list—a calamity which Hardy had some difficulty in averting. The provincial Press was extravagant in its praise of the donors, taking the opportunity in a leading article to stress the importance of this wonderful voluntary work on the part of India's business men. 'An undoubted sign of the times, and a long step towards complete self-government in India, if not independence itself. If without help from alien rulers or the pressure that was a blot on the old methods of administration, Indians could show such marvellous public spirit, then it was indeed time that the people of the country should rule their own destinies unhampered by an alien administration.' This effusion was headed 'A clarion call.'

His Excellency the Viceroy himself took a personal interest in the enterprise; he studied the plans of the building and suggested a few minor alterations in the design (which had been entrusted to local talent), hinting graciously that it might be a convenience to patients wishing to use the upper story if a stairway could be included in the design. A minor point, of course, but it might be worth consideration. Intimation was received that His Excellency would be pleased to allow the hospital to bear his own name.

And it rose, gaunt and ugly, isolated in a bare plain of brown fields, the grazing-place of goats and half-starved cattle by day, the mock of derisive jackals by night.

Now it is one thing to build a hospital, but quite another to induce patients to go into it. The Indian is a conservative fellow, tied down by strict caste rules as to whom he may associate with and who may cook his food without jeopardising his soul. In spite of the doctor's well-meant efforts, few patients showed a willingness to go within its doors. It is true that some of the lower castes with little social status at stake came for treatment, but that only made matters worse, because rumour was current that anyone who went inside the building would lose caste. In spite of Hardy's sup-

port of the doctor's efforts, the fact remained that only one-tenth of the beds were occupied.

Then a terrible bombshell fell upon Chitalpur. His Excellency the Viceroy would visit the station to inspect the new hospital! Naturally the populace was intensely gratified by the news. Hardy cursed, and Peel, the policeman, swore coarse vernacular oaths. Viceregal visits meant uncomfortable alien tail coats, stiff collars and ridiculous top-hats. Moreover, they caused great anxiety to the police who were responsible for the personal safety of His Excellency, especially in Chitalpur, which was notorious for the number of bad characters in its crowded bazaars. It would be impossible for the police to watch every one of these men, nor would the jail hold them. Peel, the policeman, known in the bazaar as the 'Captan Sahib,' held anxious conference with his subordinates. The worst characters were moved on to other districts or closely watched till detected in normal crime, when there was sufficient excuse for them to be safely locked in jail. The rest, and there were plenty of them, were the cause of much anxiety.

Hardy, Peel and the doctor met in the club the evening before the viceregal visit. Overwork and anxiety had tried their tempers to the utmost.

'Curse your beastly hospital,' raved the 'Captan Sahib,' 'no one wanted the beastly thing, I don't believe that anyone wished to subscribe to it, and I know they will not go into it. Are they frightened of you, doctor?' he asked, viciously.

'Oh, do dry up!' the Civil Surgeon snapped, 'a nice sort of fool I shall look to-morrow when the Viceroy finds my hospital empty. You policemen have a soft job compared with mine. All you have to do is to look smart—an effort, I admit, but a uniform covers a multitude of sins—snap out a few orders to your brigands, then go off to a comfortable breakfast. Damn it, man, I have to explain why I have no patients.'

'Yes,' retorted the policeman, 'and if I cannot get some fifty potential assassins safely out of the way you may have a dying Viceroy in your hospital to bring back to life. Curse your hospital, I say.'

'Well, why don't you start a riot in the bazaar, beat up your assassins and put them to bed in my hospital?'

'You might kill them,' answered the policeman, hopefully. 'I can't raise a riot,' he continued. 'Look here, it is no use our

getting stuffy with one another. Come and have a drink with me in the verandah.'

'That's right, children,' laughed Hardy, 'run away and make friends.'

The other members of the club were discussing the only subject for conversation. Was a blue suit good enough? Really, top-hats in the tropics were about the limit! The ladies were in the full enjoyment of a discussion on dresses.

In the verandah the policeman and the doctor held low-toned conversation.

'You have fifty beds?'

'Yes,' was the reply, 'and they are all empty.'

'Could you deal with a sudden rush of patients?'

'Of course I could.'

'Good, then don't be caught napping.'

After another drink to steady their nerves they joined the ladies.

That night the doctor was unexpectedly roused from his bed. He was urgently needed in the hospital. The messenger gave no details. Normally a call at such an hour justified blasphemy. Now the doctor felt hopeful.

How can one adequately describe the splendid confusion of a viceregal visit to a small station? The overhauling of long-stored-up clothes by the men, the ordering of new dresses by the ladies, the anxieties of the pushers to be presented to His Excellency, the intrigues of the modest to avoid such an ordeal.

On paper the programme was simple. The Viceroy would arrive in the morning by special train, leaving again in the afternoon after inspecting the hospital. His train would be preceded by a pilot train in which would travel the railway officials that really mattered, the general manager of the line having a seat in the viceregal train itself. Chitalpur Station was almost unrecognisable, so gaily was it decked with flags, flower-pots, strings of leaves and tinsel. An enormous notice bid the Viceroy welcome. A strip of red baize was laid from where the carriage was to stop to the exit lest he should soil the viceregal boots. There was a little anxiety about this baize and some experiment on the part of the engine-driver on the previous day lest the carriage should not pull up at exactly the right spot without jerking. No easy job that.

Only a few selected people were allowed on the platform—a dozen gazetted officers and the principal subscribers to the hospital fund.

The great moment had come. The station master ran out of his office on to the platform.

'Passing Ampura!' he gasped, then leant down to adjust his sock suspenders. The waiting officials tittered nervously. Everyone on the platform pulled himself together for the ordeal. The final adjustment of a tie, the mopping of a brow or the glance down the trousers. Smoke showed over the horizon beyond a cutting. Then the pilot engine drew past, and not long after the gaily flagged engine of the viceregal train rounded the curve in the cutting and the train drew cautiously up along the platform. There was a shuffling of feet and the craning of necks to view the exalted visitor while someone said 'Stand back!' in an important voice. An official got out of the train and Peel was prevented just in time from saluting the wrong man. At last he appeared and the police rifles crashed to the present.

After shaking hands with Hardy, His Excellency graciously received a loyal address of welcome from the president of the municipal council and a flattering poem about himself from the local bard who kindly offered to sing his inspiration on the spot—an unexpected item not on the official programme.

'And how is the hospital doing?' asked His Excellency.

'A fine building, sir,' said Hardy, carefully. 'But here is Major MacNee, our popular Civil Surgeon, who can explain details better than I can.'

His Excellency shook hands.

'How many patients have you under treatment?'

'Every bed is full, Your Excellency.'

'What?' asked Hardy, astonished.

'The hospital is full,' said the doctor, firmly.

'That speaks well for your work, Major,' observed the Viceroy.

The blushing doctor tried to look modest.

After further presentations the party moved off according to the carefully arranged programme. Outside, in the station yard, a large crowd was being kept back by the police. The local band played soft music in the background and in compliment to the occasion broke into a rendering of European music, one of the performers succeeding in producing a fair imitation of 'We won't go home till morning,' a classic that was beyond the capacity of the rest of the band, who made the nearest noise to the tune as possible. The anxious police officer saw more of his plain-clothes men in the crowd than doubtful characters.

When the party arrived at the new hospital another address of welcome was presented, then His Excellency did the round of the wards. To Hardy's surprise every bed was occupied except in the female ward, which was empty; it was obvious that the doctor was trying to keep the Viceroy away from that part of the building.

Now His Excellency, having learned the vernacular under the instruction of the excellent munshi, saw his opportunity of a little practice. The patients seemed to be subdued and scared, which was natural and proper in the presence of a Viceroy. They somehow did not impress His Excellency very favourably; however, a show of kindly sympathetic grace was expected. The Viceroy approached a particularly frightened-looking patient.

'Well, my poor fellow,' he said, carefully picking his words so that there could be no mistake in the grammar, 'and what is wrong with you?'

'Great Sahib, I am well.'

'Good,' said the Viceroy, turning to Hardy, 'the man seems to appreciate the treatment he gets here.'

Hardy was puzzled. He had seen some of these patients before, but could not remember where. The only person in the hospital who looked really ill was the doctor who since His Excellency's exhibition of Hindustani was most anxious to take him on to see the operating theatre. But no, the Viceroy, now confident in his ability, was anxious to ask more questions. He approached another bed.

'And how are you feeling?' he asked.

The man was silent.

'What is wrong with this man?' he asked the doctor.

'I have not yet made a satisfactory diagnosis of his case. Rather a complicated one I fear, sir,' stammered the nervous doctor.

The next man made history.

'I hope you are not suffering much?' said the Viceroy.

'Sahib,' replied the man, 'I am not ill.'

'Extraordinary,' commented His Excellency. Then humouring the poor sufferer, he continued, 'Then why are you here?'

'Great Lord Sahib,' whined the man, 'My Father and Mother, Protector of the Poor, I have done no wrong. I am a poor man with many children. When I was sent to jail it was on a false accusation. I did not murder my brother.'

'But if you are not ill, why are you in hospital?'

'Great Lord Sahib, the Police "Captan Sahib" ordered us all to go to bed in hospital until the Lord Sahib had gone away!'

THE FINDING OF THE MOWBRAY STONE.

BY LORD HOWARD OF PENRITH.

'Many a time hath banished Norfolk fought
For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field,
Streaming the ensign of the Christian Cross,
Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens,
And toil'd with works of war, retir'd himself
To Italy; and there, at Venice, gave
His body to that pleasant country's earth.'

—SHAKESPEARE: *King Richard II*, Act IV, Scene i.

ONE morning in January, 1930, shortly before I left the Washington Embassy for good, I was informed that Mr. Justice Holmes had called and would like to see me.

This was indeed a great honour. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, then nearly eighty years of age, was the grand old man of the Supreme Court of the United States. The most courtly as well as the most handsome of octogenarians, a judge whose decisions will ever be remembered, a brilliant and delightful conversationalist, an officer in the Northern Army during the American Civil War who had been left for dead on the battlefield, and one of the greatest personalities of Washington to-day; a man, in fact, whom to meet once was an event—to what could I owe the honour of a visit from him?

I hurried to the morning-room where he was waiting for me and after a word of welcome, asked him if there was anything I could do for him. He said he had not come to ask for anything, but only wished to tell me a story which he had heard many years ago from Mr. Charles Eliot Norton, President of Harvard University, regarding a monument at Venice to the Duke of Norfolk mentioned in Shakespeare's *Richard II*. He thought the story might interest me and he did not wish the curious facts connected with the rediscovery of the monument to be altogether forgotten.

He then told me shortly the story of the finding of the Mowbray Stone which Mr. Norton, as I discovered later, had published in the *Atlantic Monthly* of June, 1889, of which I shall give a summary in the course of this article, with the kind permission of the present owner of that famous Review, Mr. Ellery Sedgwick.

Mr. Justice Holmes asked me whether I had ever heard the story or seen the stone, or even knew if it existed.

I replied that I had never heard the story nor did I know whether the stone existed; but I would enquire. After making some enquiries from persons whom I thought likely to know, I had to tell Mr. Justice Holmes that these had led to nothing, and I dropped the trail.

Some months later in Rome, a former Prefect of Rome, Signor Zoccoletti, also asked me if I had ever heard of this stone, which he supposed must be either in some National Museum in England or in some house belonging to a member of the Howard family. He had heard it had been removed from Venice to England about the middle of last century. I said I had been trying to trace it but had failed, but, stirred to further activity by receiving information about it from such different sources as a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States and a former Prefect of the City of Rome, I decided to renew the quest.

It struck me that if anyone knew about the whereabouts of this monument it would be my octogenarian kinsman, Mr. Philip Howard of Corby. Accordingly I wrote to him and received a reply by return of post to the effect that the stone existed and was actually in the entrance hall at Corby Castle in Cumberland. He added that there was an account of it in the two volumes, *Howard Memorials*, compiled by his grandfather.

Very shortly after this I met in London Miss Norton, daughter of Mr. Charles Eliot Norton, and she told me that her father had written down the story of the discovery of the stone as he heard it from the lips of the finder, Mr. Rawdon Brown, who, for many years, was an agent of the British Museum at Venice, and had published the story in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Later, I received from her a copy of this paper and from it I have extracted the principal features of a tale which, in its own way, is as curious as the most fantastic modern detective story.

Mr. Norton begins with a little panegyric of Rawdon Brown, which is interesting but not specially relevant here. Mr. Brown lived for fifty years in Venice without apparently returning to England. He used to say: 'I never wake in the morning, but I thank God that He has let me spend my days in Venice; and sometimes of an evening when I go to the Piazzetta, I am afraid to shut my eyes, lest when I open them I shall find it all a dream.' He was, says Mr. Norton, a distinguished scholar and an antiquary.

His study was filled with manuscripts, books, documents and adorned with paintings and engravings and a hundred pieces of minor art and curiosity. The walls of his dining-room were painted with cheerful scenes from Venetian life in the eighteenth century, taken from the designs of Longhi, the Goldoni of painting, whose pictures are always lively, gay and full of the character of a charming vanished Society, which, even in its decay retained a more poetic quality than was to be found elsewhere in Europe.

It was in this room one evening after dinner that Rawdon Brown told Charles Eliot Norton the story of his coming to Venice.

It was in the summer of 1833. After reading the lines in Shakespeare's *Richard II* which stand at the head of this article, he became so eager to hunt for the burial-place of the Duke of Norfolk, referred to as having died in Venice, who at Venice 'gave his body to that pleasant land,' that, in spite of the fear of cholera, he started for Venice with these lines ringing in his head to search for Mowbray's grave. No one whom he consulted was able to tell him anything about it. He then got access to the State archives and historical manuscripts in the library of St. Mark's and finally learnt that the Duke of Norfolk had been honourably interred within the precincts of St. Mark's and that, after prolonged efforts, the Howard heirs of Mowbray had obtained leave from the Signory of Venice in 1533, one hundred and thirty-five years after his death, to have his remains disinterred and brought to England. The place in Venice where he was buried was unknown, and of the monument that marked the grave nothing apparently remained.

Nevertheless, Rawdon Brown continued interested and pursued his search for the stone.

Many years later he found a little book, published in 1682, by a Frenchman named Freschot, living in Venice, containing a most remarkable plate.

The book was called *Li Pregi della nobiltà Veneta abbozzati in un giuoco d'Arme* (Cognizances of the Venetian Nobility sketched at a Tournament).

Although Freschot explained all the heraldic devices here shown as symbolic of the majesty and sovereignty of Venice, Rawdon Brown at once recognised that this was a piece of English and not Italian heraldry.

Freschot stated that the plate represented a sculptured marble slab on the outer wall of the Ducal Palace, under the gallery that faces the Canal looking towards San Giorgio Maggiore.

It immediately struck Rawdon Brown that this must be the monumental slab set up in memory of Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, for which he was looking.

Here was the royal banner borne by Mowbray, as Earl Marshal of England. The three feathers at the sides, Mr. Brown explained



as the three feathers of the Principality of Wales, which, owing to King Richard having no son, remained merged in the Crown from 1377 till the murder of Richard in 1399. Beneath the banner is the Mowbray Lion and cap of maintenance. To the left is the White Hart in a pale, the cognizance of Richard II, attached by a chain to a helmet below the cap of maintenance and united to it by the S S Collar of the Garter.

The helmet covers the head of the White Swan, the cognizance of Henry of Bolingbroke, Mowbray's enemy. The Swan has a

coronet round his neck, attached by a chain to the staff of the banner and to another collar of the Garter with S S.

The meaning, Rawdon Brown interpreted thus :

It was Mowbray's boast, symbolised by the Lion standing upon the helmet that covers the Swan, that it was Richard's protection that alone saved the Swan from the Lion, or, in other words, Bolingbroke from Mowbray.

Then arose in Mr. Brown's mind the question : where was the monument ? It was no longer where it had been when Freschot saw it in 1682 on the Ducal Palace. Mr. Brown consulted various people who might have been expected to know something about it, but without success.

I must now tell the rest of the story in Rawdon Brown's own words, as recorded by Mr. Norton :

' So time went on. But one Christmas Day, or the day before Christmas, I was rowing over to the Lido, and as I passed in front of the Palace, I thought of the stone, and it came into my head that I had never asked about it of an old mason named Spira, the worthiest of masons, a genuine conservative, whom I had employed when I was putting the Ca' Dario in order, and whom I had often noticed for the care and reverence which he had for the old work. So, when I came back from my row, I took Freschot from the shelf, and gave it to Tony here, bidding him carry the book to Spira, show him the plate, and ask him if he had seen anything like it. Then the thing went out of my head : but that evening, as he was serving me at dinner, Tony said to me that Spira knew all about it, and was waiting outside to tell me what he knew. I couldn't believe my ears. I had Spira in at once, and said to him, " Good God ! Spira, do you know about that stone ? Be careful what you say." " But, your Signoria," said he, " I know all about it, and I am the only man in Venice who does, and I have a good right to know it. I almost lost my life for the stone." Then he went on to tell me that he had been one of the workmen employed when the French—Lord bless them !—were hacking away, French fashion, at the Doge's Palace. They took this stone out of the wall on the front, as good a stone as ever was, and they had it put in the court ; and one day the overseer of the works ordered him to chip off the carving and make the face smooth so that it might serve for a block in the pavement. But Spira did not like the job, and employed himself otherwise, till a day or two afterwards, the Frenchman, noticing that his order had not been obeyed, grew angry, bade Spira do what he was ordered, and directed that the stone should be laid in the

pavement of the terrace that joins the church and the palace. "So," said Spira, "I still would not spoil the stone. I thought it would answer as well to work the other side"; and he turned the stone over, face down, smoothed the back, cut away as little as possible round the edges to fit it to the space where it was to go, and then got help as speedily as possible to hoist it to the terrace, and have it laid, face downward still, before the Frenchman should come round again and find out that the carving had not been touched. "But are you sure," said I, "that this was the very stone?" "Sure?" replied he. "I am not likely to be mistaken, for when we were hoisting it into place I got such a fall from the ladder as to stun me, and they took me up for dead; and when they found I was not killed, they cut the mark of a cross on the stone on which I fell, and there, your Signoria, you can see it any day with your own eyes." And there, the next day, Spira showed it to me, and showed me, too, in the pavement above, the back of the Mowbray stone I had been hunting for so long.

Then I laid my plans to get it. There would be no use in asking the Austrian authorities for permission to remove it. They were too suspicious; they would have fancied some plot. So I told Spira I must have that stone, but must get it secretly, and bade him make a slab of precisely similar quality and dimensions. Then I went to the good old Librarian, and asked leave to go freely upon the terrace, access to which was through the rooms under his charge, to make a drawing from it. I asked also that my servant might come and go with me, to carry my easel and other things. My old friend made no difficulty, and so day after day I went, till people got used to seeing persons at work in this place, which was commonly closed and vacant. Before long Spira came to tell me the new stone was ready; then I told him to get a man whom he could trust, and with him and Tony to bring the stone down that afternoon, with all the means for raising the old one and setting the new in its place, and to do the work as quietly and expeditiously as possible. When it should be done and the Mowbray slab should be in my boat at the back entrance to the palace on the Canal, Tony was to come to me, who would be in the library, at hand to explain if any question should arise or any unforeseen difficulty be encountered. All went well. It was late in the winter afternoon when Tony appeared and said the boat was waiting to take me home. I went down, and there it was, covered with a cloak. I got it safely to my house, and then looked at it. Yes, it was the real stone that had been set up as a memorial of Norfolk, just as Spira had said, just as Freschot had engraved it, except that at the top it bore the inscription, omitted in the engraving

and affording a new proof of its genuineness, ADI XXII SEPTEMBRIO MCCCIC—the date of Mowbray's death.

The next thing was to get it out of Venice and to England. An English vessel was in port, and I arranged with the captain to take it. He was to sail in about three weeks. Before it should go I thought I would have a cast of it made. But this was not done when, one day, much short of the appointed time, the captain sent me word that he must sail early the next morning. I bade Tony fetch the formatore and his man at once, and keep them at work, with abundant supply of wine, until the mould should be made. They were to work all night, if needful. It was three in the morning when Tony came to tell me the work was done, but that there was such a fog that you could not see your hand before you. Never mind; I knew the way down the Canal blind-fold. The stone was put in the boat, Tony and I, Spira and his man, at the oars. It was dark, indeed, and, to my shame be it said, I missed the place where the vessel was moored and brought up at San Giorgio instead of close to the Piazzetta. But then I knew just where we were, made for the vessel, and found that she had sailed an hour before! We must chase her, and just as we got in the entrance of the port the sun was near rising and the fog lifted a little. I looked up, and there was the stern of the vessel above me. The slab was hoisted on board. It got safely to England, and when you are next there you must go to Corby Castle and see it.'

Not long after this Rawdon Brown told the Venetian authorities what he had done and gave them a cast from the stone.

Whether these authorities were Austrian or Italian, after Venice became a part of Italy, Mr. Norton does not state; but they seem to have taken the matter not unkindly, for they set up a cast of the stone which Rawdon Brown gave them in the hall of the Ducal Palace from which one enters the stairway above which is Titian's fresco of St. Christopher. There is, says Mr. Norton, a glowing inscription beneath the cast in honour of Rawdon Brown, the illustrious investigator of the history and monuments of Venice.

Thus this interesting relic of English history in a distant land, hidden for its preservation, might have lain face downwards till Doomsday, had not Rawdon Brown been so good a sleuth-hound in the track of antique things.

It is doubtful whether the stone is more interesting on account of its historic and heraldic value or on account of the strange story of its rediscovery and clandestine shipment to England.

THE RIO DE ORO: AN AIRMAN'S IMPRESSION.

BY RICHARD FINDLAY.

IN December, 1930, I spent nine days at Cape Juby, one of the two outposts from which the Spanish Government administers—if an almost complete inactivity can be so described—the Rio de Oro. The other is Villa Cisneros, to which the Spanish political prisoners convicted of Royalist sympathies have recently been exiled. There is little difference between them, except that the garrison at Villa Cisneros is considerably the larger.

The Rio de Oro, some 700 miles long and 300 miles in average depth, extends along the coast of North-West Africa from Cape Nun to Cape Blanco. It is inhabited by nomadic Moors to whom all white men are natural enemies, and those who fall into their hands are greatly to be pitied. They may, when the ransom demanded for them has been paid, be brought to the forts of Juby or Villa Cisneros under a flag of truce, but the time of waiting will be one of hardship and harsh treatment. And—though of late years the Moors of this region as a whole have discovered that their prisoners are more profitable alive than dead—they may be unlucky in their choice of captors, and be put to death.

I was on a flight from London to Teneriffe, and landed at Agadir early on a morning of bright sunshine to refuel for the journey to Cape Juby, which lies 276 miles farther south. M. Baille, Chef of the Compagnie Générale Aeropostale at Agadir, made a 'sondage' for me, a manœuvre which consists in releasing a small gas-filled balloon, watching its ascent through a theodolite, and thus estimating the speed and direction of the wind at various heights. The light wind at the surface blew from the south, but, he told me, at 1,000 metres above the ground I should find it behind me. Hills, my mechanic, worked upon the engine to such purpose that he succeeded in extracting from it more R.P.M. than it had ever given before. When all was ready, and we had taken our places in our small three-seater cabin machine, M. Baille uttered in a solemn voice these parting words: 'I advise you not to go. You carry insufficient petrol, in my opinion, to allow for a possible change in wind-direction, and, you must remember, a forced landing means almost certain capture, a demand for ransom, and, by no means

improbably—death. If you arrive safely at Cape Juby, ask the Manager of the Aeropostale Company there to notify me immediately by wireless. Failing its receipt, I shall send a machine to look for you, and ask my colleague at Cape Juby to do the same. Between us we may save you.'

For the first forty miles, as far as the oasis of Tiznit, our route lay over a flat and sandy country which reached from the foot of the Atlas Mountains, far to the left, to the sea. This was still French Morocco, and we were safe. But twenty-five minutes after leaving Agadir we saw Tiznit disappear behind us, and knew that we were over the unconquered zone. Now the coast-line was rugged and broken by the last spurs of the Anti-Atlas Mountains, which here touch the sea for nearly two-score miles. Beyond them, desolate and seemingly infinite, lay the Spanish Sahara. From 3,000 feet our field of vision was considerable, and, long before we reached it, we could see the first fringes of the desert, the Plage Blanche, gleaming white as its name in the sunlight. I scanned the ground continually for roving bands of Moors, but there were none to be seen. And indeed the Aeropostale pilots who for years have maintained a weekly service over this country on their way to and from Dakar in Sénégal have told me that only on rare occasions are Moors visible from the air, but that when a forced landing has been made they have seemed to grow out of the ground, so quickly have they appeared upon the scene.

An hour and a half had passed, and we were over the Wad Draa, a flat high tableland where, three days before, a French pilot had forced-landed, and whence he had been rescued by a machine of the Aeropostale Company, whose pilot, at great risk, had landed beside him, assisted him to remedy the defect in his engine, and then escorted him back to Agadir, the take-off of the two machines almost coinciding with the arrival of a band of Moors. I had talked to the rescued pilot at Agadir that morning, and, with a truly Grand Guignolesque sense of the *macabre*, and with 'encourager les autres' as his guiding principle, he had been at pains to describe in detail what would have been his fate if the Moors had arrived a few minutes earlier.

Another hour went by. Forced by gathering cloud to descend to within 1,000 feet of the ground, we saw half-buried by the sand the rotting skeleton of an aeroplane, one of the many which the Aeropostale Company have lost upon this route. It was not a heartening sight. The sun had disappeared, the sky was grey with

a threat of rain, and the dreary wastes of land and water seemed minute by minute to grow more definitely hostile. And then, suddenly, we saw before us the coastline bending sharply southwards, and, just beyond the bend, a dark blur upon the shore. Could *this* be Cape Juby? I looked at my watch; only two and a half hours had elapsed since we had left Agadir, and I had expected to take at least three hours for the journey. But a glance at the map dispelled all doubt. I nodded reassuringly at Hills, and stared eagerly at the blur ahead, which, as I stared, grew larger, took shape, became a fort, whose white walls now showed clearly against the dark background of the sea. My first feeling was one of devout thankfulness. Never have I been so glad to see a human habitation, a link with the world of familiar things which seemed so far away. And then, the next instant, I thought, 'Here, to the life, is the fort of P. C. Wren's *Beau Geste*!' As we approached it the lesser details of the camp revealed themselves. We saw low buildings clustered about the landward side of the fort, a hangar near at hand, a short pier jutting out from the water's edge, and, beyond it, a long squat building which appeared to rise out of the very sea itself. As we came still nearer we saw the boundaries of the aerodrome, and, packed close together in a rough semicircle about it, innumerable native tents. Now we were over the aerodrome, the greater part of which was flooded by recent heavy rain, and I circled it twice to allow the whole strange scene below to form an ineffaceable picture in my mind. North, and south, and east, as far as the eye could reach, utterly featureless and utterly forlorn, stretched the desert; to the west lay the grey expanse of the sea, its wave-crests whipped into white foam by the strong northerly wind. And in my fancy both sea and desert seemed to be extending hungry arms towards the tiny outpost dominated by the grim white battle-mented fort, as if they would engulf it. Over everything a brooding melancholy held undisputed sway.

But at least there was human companionship here, and, to remind me of that fact, I saw that already many figures were running towards the spot where we should land. I closed the throttle, approached the aerodrome on a left-hand gliding turn, landed, ran into a pool of water, and stopped abruptly. Instantly we were surrounded by an excited mob composed for the most part of Moors, men, women, and children, though there were many Spanish soldiers amongst them. Even in that first moment I noticed how ragged were the latter's uniforms, but it was not until much later

that I was to realise the full import of this fact. As we got out of the machine the clamour of native voices was deafening, and I was greatly relieved when a caterpillar-driven Citroën car drove through the crowd, scattering it right and left, and stopped a few yards away. Its sole occupant dismounted and came towards me with an air of authority. He was a small man, wearing dirty white duck trousers, a flannel shirt open at the neck, an old tweed jacket, and canvas shoes upon his bare feet. His expression was one of infinite sadness, of hopeless resignation to a malignant fate. He addressed me in indifferent French, with a faint smile which served only to accentuate his tragic mien. 'I am Captain Burguete, the Chief Officer of the Aerodrome,' he said, 'and entirely at your service. Pray command me.' I introduced myself, and explained that as soon as I had refuelled my machine I intended to continue my journey to Teneriffe. 'But first you must have some food,' he replied. 'My men will assist your mechanic with the machine, and see that he has some luncheon. You yourself will do me the honour of accompanying me.' He called to a sergeant-pilot who was standing by, and issued rapid instructions. I told Hills that I would rejoin him in an hour's time, climbed into the Citroën beside Burguete, and we set off for the fort, half a mile away.

A few moments later we stopped before the great high doors of the fort, in front of which stood two sentries, one of whom knocked upon the doors with the butt of his rifle. They swung open, and we passed through, mounted a stone staircase, and reached a gallery. Burguete flung open a door, uttered in a loud voice what sounded like a military command—I have, I regret to say, no knowledge of Spanish—and preceded me into a room in which some twenty officers sat at luncheon. As they rose to their feet, Burguete led me across the room and presented me to a thick-set, swarthy individual with the badges of a colonel's rank upon the shoulder-straps of his tunic, who bowed and spoke a few words in Spanish. Burguete turned to me. 'This,' he said, 'is Colonel de Peña, the Lieutenant-Governor of Cape Juby. He wishes me to tell you that you are a most welcome guest.' A chair was placed for me on de Peña's right hand, Burguete took his place opposite, and we all sat down.

I glanced about the room. With few exceptions the officers present were dressed in crumpled drill jackets and trousers of varying degrees of whiteness, and none of them had shaved within the last few days. Self-respect, it seemed, had surrendered to the

forces of isolation, and a general slovenliness had taken its place.

Most of the men appeared moodily preoccupied with their own thoughts. As an orderly placed a plate of bacon and eggs in front of me, the officer on my right—one Captain Guarner, as I later discovered—volunteered an explanation of the prevailing air of gloom. 'We are very unhappy to-day,' he told me, in excellent English. 'Two of our comrades left here two days ago to fly to Villa Cisneros, 575 kilometres down the coast. They failed to arrive. Machines were sent yesterday from Villa Cisneros to look for them, and found their machine 40 kilometres north of the fort. But there were no signs of the occupants.' 'I'm very sorry indeed to hear that,' I replied. 'They have, I suppose, been captured by the Moors?' 'Yes, they have certainly been captured,' said Guarner. 'And will be held to ransom?' I asked. He looked at me with serious eyes. 'No, my friend,' he answered. 'They will have been killed immediately.' There was a finality in his words which precluded doubt, and, as I heard them, the dangers of the Rio de Oro, which before had lain in the background, vague and shadowy, loomed suddenly large and real. I was oppressed by a sense of horror, embarrassed by my inability to express it adequately. At this moment a fortunate diversion was created by the orderly, who placed a telegraph form and a pencil beside my plate. As he did so Burguete leaned forward and asked me to write a message informing the authorities at Agadir of our safe arrival. Thankful for this opportunity to change the subject gracefully, I picked up the pencil. 'Atterrissons à 14.10 heures. Remerciements sincères,' I wrote, and passed the form across the table to Burguete, who read it, and gave it to the orderly with instructions as to its transmission.

During the remainder of luncheon I talked of trivialities. The one essential was to prevent the conversation from reverting to those two missing men, whose terrible fate was reflected in the faces of their brother officers. And in this, I saw with considerable relief, I had succeeded, for the meal was over, and we were rising to our feet. The Governor shook me by the hand, his 'God-speed,' and my thanks, were exchanged with the assistance of Burguete, and then I was on my way out of the fort.

Ten minutes later we were in the air, headed across sixty-five miles of open sea to Fuertaventura, the nearest island in the Canary group.

Various adventures, some amusing and some far otherwise,

befell us before we landed—after two days weather-bound in the Gran Canaria—on the aerodrome of Los Rodeos in Tenerife, the first British machine, incidentally, to do so. Three days later, my business completed, we made the return journey, with an engine that was making peculiar and depressing noises, and with so much drift that when we struck the African coast we were some forty miles south of our objective. Turning into the teeth of the gale we flew along the desolate shore towards the only sanctuary in the whole 590 miles which lie between Tiznit and Villa Cisneros. Dusk was falling when we landed for the second time at Cape Juby.

Captain Burguete again greeted us, accompanied on this occasion by a young man of pleasing and humorous appearance whom he introduced as Lieutenant Bengoechea, of the Spanish Sahara Squadron. Leaving Hills to superintend the housing of the machine, we three drove towards a long, low building which lay at a short distance from the fort, and which contained the Mess and Quarters of the Squadron, whose guests we should be for the night.

We stopped before a doorway, and entered a room about fifteen feet square, furnished with a large table in the centre, two smaller ones in front of the shuttered windows, several chairs, a settee littered with newspapers and periodicals, and a wireless cabinet on the top of which stood a gramophone and a pile of records. There was a second door facing the one by which we had entered, and, from the smell of cooking which drifted through it, I guessed that it led to the Mess kitchen. The floor was covered with worn brown linoleum, its surface scarred and pockmarked by the burns of countless cigarettes, whose ends lay everywhere. The dark paper which was peeling here and there from the walls was relieved, somewhat pathetically, by two or three aerial photographs of the camp, and by several pictures cut from *La Vie Parisienne* and *Le Rire*. Such was the living-room of the Mess of the Sahara Squadron at Cape Juby. Dirty, shabby, and ill-kept though it was, there was about it an atmosphere of comfort which made it, in that wild place, a haven in the midst of oppressive solitude. Though I did not know it at the time, it was to be my home for many days.

I asked Burguete if it would be possible for my mechanic to be accommodated in the officers' quarters, since I knew that in his ignorance of any language but English he would be lonely and unhappy if separated from me. 'Of course,' he replied. 'It would not be right that an Englishman should be quartered with

our troops, who are a rough lot, with many criminals amongst them.' I thought of the sullen faces of some of the soldiers I had seen, of their tattered uniforms, the rags bound round their feet in place of boots, and with a sudden shock remembered that this was a military penitentiary. As if he had read my mind, Burguete nodded. 'Yes, my friend,' he said, 'for many of us here Cape Juby is a fitting punishment. For the others——' He ceased from speaking, and shrugged his shoulders, but there had been a world of bitterness in his voice which its low tones could not conceal, and I had a glimpse of unsuspected passions smouldering deep down inside the small thin figure, and blazing for an instant in his tragic eyes. And then it was gone, and he spoke again without emotion. 'Come,' he said, 'I will show you your quarters.'

A fair-sized bedroom, plainly but sufficiently furnished, had been allotted to me. It belonged to Burguete's brother, the Squadron-Commander, now on special leave in Spain. Hills was to have a smaller room next door. A store-room, filled with a medley of dirt and rubbish, and a bathroom, which appeared more ornamental than useful, since there was no running water, completed a self-contained suite. A thin layer of sand lay everywhere, and had drifted into small piles in the corners.

We returned to the untidy comfort of the living-room, to the twinkle in Bengoechea's dark eyes and the humour in his smile, and my heart warmed towards this young man, who alone of all those whom I had already seen and met seemed proof against the melancholy discontent which overhung Cape Juby like a plague. He had obtained some bottles of lager beer, and we drank to our mutual good fortune. Shortly afterwards Burguete bade us both good night. I was not sorry to see him go, in spite of his charm and courtesy, for the intolerable sadness of his manner and bearing, the tonelessness of his quiet voice, weighed heavily upon my spirits. I asked Bengoechea—who spoke French with an execrable accent, supplementing it by means of the art of dumb show, of which, I realised then, he was an absolute master—where he had gone, and if he did not live in the Squadron Mess. He waved a hand in the direction of the fort. 'He lives in quarters over there,' he replied, 'with his wife.' 'Good God!' I exclaimed, 'his *wife*! Don't tell me that there are Spanish *women* in this place!' 'Only two,' he answered. 'Burguete and the doctor both have their wives here.' I was astonished at this revelation. It seemed utterly incongruous, indecent, somehow, that white women should live in

the midst of such loneliness, such squalor, so far from the proper sphere of their femininity. 'They need not stay here all the time,' Bengoechea went on. 'A boat from Las Palmas calls here once a fortnight with food and water for the outpost, and sometimes they return in it to the island and stay for a few weeks.' Certainly this periodical escape would make their lot a little easier, but again I had a fleeting vision of the mutinous faces of many of the soldiers I had seen, and thought how I should have hated a wife of mine to spend any part of her life amongst such men. 'Tell me,' I asked, 'do you ever have trouble with the troops?' 'Sometimes,' replied Bengoechea. 'But not during the last four months, since I have been here.' He laughed, as if to disclaim responsibility for this state of order. 'It is in the heat of the summer, and when there are frequent sandstorms,' he continued, 'that they are most difficult to handle. And sometimes there are gales, so that the boat with provisions cannot put in here, and there is a shortage of food. That is unpleasant. Then, always, there is the "cafard".' Shades of *Beau Geste* again! The cafard! That insidious and terrible disease which attacks the minds of men in these wild desert places, born of monotony, and inactivity, and solitude, and the ever-present danger of attack, driving them mad at last with an urgent longing to escape! So I had always thought of it, and it seemed that here at Cape Juby one could meet it face to face.

There was a knock at the door, and Hills entered. He had finished his work, he said, or as much of it as was possible in the ill-lit hangar, and hoped that he was not intruding. I introduced him to Bengoechea, who greeted him with the gay charm which was his most delightful characteristic. From that evening he constituted himself our particular host, and right nobly did he perform that function.

An orderly now announced that dinner was ready, and we took our places at the table. The food was plain, passably well cooked, and ample. The chief dish—I suspect owing to the fact that none of the food was fresh, since it appeared to form the staple diet of the garrison—was a species of hot-pot. Preceded by *hors d'œuvres* of a sort, it was followed by tinned fruit and cheese. We drank red Spanish wine.

We were drinking our coffee and Cointreau when the door opened and there entered an officer whom I remembered having seen three days before when I had had luncheon in the fort. This was Lieutenant Miguel, of the Infantry Detachment, a tall, slim, unshaven

figure in a crumpled uniform of the Spanish brand of khaki. He impressed me, when he had sat down to drink with us, as of the true revolutionary type, concealing beneath a conventional cynicism of speech and manner a seething dissatisfaction with the established order of things. However, he was genial enough, and presently suggested that I might like to see the inside of a Moorish tent. We accordingly set out towards the native encampment.

Later that evening, as we sat cross-legged against the tent-sides on the rich carpet which covered the floor, drinking the customary three cups of mint-tea, at once bitter and sweet, provided by our host, the Moorish sergeant-major of the native Camel Corps, Miguel suggested that I should postpone for a day my departure from Cape Juby. He had, he said, arranged to go fifteen kilometres inland on the following day to shoot gazelle, and would be glad if I would accompany him. We could ride horses or camels, as I preferred. I replied that I should like nothing better. 'But what of the chances of capture?' I asked him. 'Oh, we shall take the Camel Corps with us as an escort,' he answered. 'It is unlikely that we shall be attacked.' The unlikelihood was comforting, but the bare idea of a desert battle, with the possibility of being on the losing side, was not one to contemplate unmoved. There was, from all accounts, no quarter for the Spanish in the Rio de Oro, and in the heat of the fray the finer shades of nationality would no doubt be lost sight of. Still, the expedition promised to be exciting, if nothing else.

Shortly afterwards we bade farewell to our hosts, and retired to our respective quarters. I undressed, climbed into a bed into which the sand had penetrated everywhere, and soon fell asleep.

Hills waked me at eight o'clock on the following morning, and I sent him to the kitchen for some hot water. He returned in a few minutes with an iron saucepanful, which he had obtained, he told me, only after going through all the motions of washing and shaving, at which the kitchen staff had raised their eyebrows in evident surprise at such unusual and unnecessary habits. I made what toilet I could in the malodorous bathroom, dressed, and joined Hills in the living-room for a breakfast of coffee, bread, honey and biscuits.

Presently Burguete came in, accompanied by a sturdily-built Frenchman whom he introduced as M. Vidal, Chef of the *Compagnie Générale Aeropostale* at Cape Juby. I told them of Miguel's invitation, when Burguete, whose face was more than ever shadowed by despair, said, 'He will not go, my friend. There are more im-

portant things to think about than shooting gazelle. There is bad news from Spain.' I would have liked to hear more, but refrained from questioning one who so obviously did not wish to discuss the matter. I felt, somehow, like an intruder in a private tragedy, and decided then and there that we could best repay the courtesy that these men had shown us by relieving them, now that they would be fully occupied with their own affairs, of any further responsibility towards their self-appointed guests.

But we were destined not to leave Cape Juby that day. Serious loss of power manifested itself when I tested the engine at full throttle, and investigation disclosed trouble which would necessitate our sending for new parts from England. I broke the news to the little group of officers who had come to speed us on our way, with apologies and regrets for troubling them further. 'Mon cher ami,' said Burguete, 'vous êtes chez vous.'

The machine was returned to the hangar, our bags to our rooms, and we met in the living-room of the Mess to discuss ways and means. 'You will send a wire to London,' said Vidal. 'Your spare parts will be despatched to Paris, thence to Toulouse by our agents, and will be brought here by our machine which leaves Toulouse for Dakar on Saturday. They will arrive on Sunday night.' To-day was Monday, so we had ample time in which to make ourselves at home.

The morning passed agreeably enough, though there was a tension in the air as of great events marching unseen to a dramatic conclusion. We were joined at luncheon by a chubby youth of perpetually smiling demeanour, one Rodriguez, second Lieutenant of Infantry, who set himself to entertain me, in extremely bad French, with Rabelaisian stories which the manner of their telling invested with irresistible humour. He pointed to some young native women who stood outside the northern window of the room, vociferously begging for food, and asked me if any of them had taken my fancy. 'Two pesetas,' he said, with peculiar emphasis, and evidently anticipating my instant and joyful acceptance, 'would be considered most generous payment.' I assured him that, with the exchange at forty-four pesetas to the pound sterling, only the most carping critic could quibble at the expense. 'You are a perfect host,' I told him. 'You think of everything. But—thank you—no!' His disappointment was so ludicrous that first Bengoechea, then I, and finally Rodriguez himself, burst into roars of laughter, which in that strained and heavy atmosphere

was so great a relief that it must have been fully five minutes before peace was restored.

That afternoon I walked about the camp with Vidal, and found him to be a lively companion, a thought too smug, perhaps, and filled with that national complacency so characteristic of the French bourgeois, but most interesting, nevertheless, and possessed of marked intelligence. He talked at great length of the Spaniards, for whom he had a supreme contempt. 'Arriérés' was the word he used to describe and explain their failings. 'They are so unreasonable,' he said, 'and they obstruct me in my work here. You know how essential it is in a dangerous country like this that pilots should have every assistance that one can give them? I wish to make "sondages" for them, but Colonel de Peña has forbidden me to do so, giving me no reason. In God's name, does he think that I could *spy* with my small balloons! As if—' he embraced the whole desolate scene, devoid of the merest vestige of vegetation, with one comprehensive sweep of his arm—'there were *anything* here to spy upon!'

I remarked upon the melancholy which possessed so many of the officers, particularly Burguete. 'But think,' said Vidal, 'what it must be to serve in such a place under such a man as Colonel de Peña. There is no morale here, nothing but a sense of hopeless futility. They are prisoners of death, these men! The Governor's weakness, his vacillation, are notorious; he has no policy but to avoid trouble, to placate the Moors. Sometimes they attack the outpost, but *never* is there a counter-attack. By de Peña's orders food is placed outside the boundaries of the camp, in the hopes that the enemy will take it and withdraw. When an Aeropostale machine forced-landed 160 kilometres north of Cape Juby, the French pilot and mechanic and the Spanish wireless-operator were murdered by the Moors who captured them. But there were no reprisals. No! my friend, de Peña received the leader of that band of assassins here, in this fort, and loaded him with presents! You have seen the two aeroplanes which belong to the Squadron? They are of an obsolete type; their engines are very old; the mechanics are bad, and cannot keep them in order. But even with their worn-out aeroplanes the pilots would be glad to patrol the desert, to bomb those who raid the outpost. They cannot, my friend; de Peña will seldom allow them to leave the ground, because he is afraid of angering the Moors, and because, if there is a forced landing, which is very probable, he must turn to me for

help, and that injures his pride! And he has *no* pride, that man, compared with Burguete! For him, that restless, sensitive one, the inactivity, the constant frustration, are terrible to bear! One cannot wonder at his invariable sadness!' 'I understand that he has his wife here,' I said. 'That is true,' replied Vidal. 'And what a life for a woman!' He pointed to a low building which adjoined the fort, and whose roof was just visible above the high wall which encircled it. 'For two years,' he went on, 'she has lived there, and never has she been outside the courtyard of that house, which is so like a prison! The doctor's wife is seen sometimes, but Burguete has the medieval outlook of the true Spaniard, and guards his wife from the eyes of all. I, too, am married; my wife comes out from France twice each year, to spend two or three months here with me. But when I am working she has no one to talk to, because of the jealousy with which these Spaniards hide their women from the world!'

He invited me to coffee in his house, which was built against the end of the fort, and entered through a stout door in a high stone wall. It was rough and primitive in its construction, little more, in fact, than a large shack, poorly furnished, and yet radiating a comfort which showed the unmistakeable touch of a woman's hand. I admired the bravery of spirit which had made a home in a place so utterly cut off from civilisation. As we drank our coffee Vidal wound up his gramophone and proceeded to play to me several pieces from Tannhäuser and The Meistersingers. It was a queer sight to see this materialistic Frenchman listening to Wagner in the back of beyond with every sign of ecstatic enjoyment. This capacity for self-detachment was, I felt, one reason why he was able to bear the loneliness of his life with equanimity.

Towards six o'clock I returned to the Mess to find a mass of officers thronging the small room to its limits. Burguete, Bengoechea, and Miguel were near the door; Captain Guarner sat at one end of the table, addressing the assembly in quiet but decisive tones. I stood against the wall, wondering what was afoot, and looking for other familiar faces in the crowd. I had seen most of them at luncheon in the fort, and remarked particularly a fierce and wild-eyed individual who had sat on that occasion on the Governor's left. Bengoechea gave me later a brief history of this man. He was an intimate friend of the famous Major Franco, and had held high rank in the Air Force in Spain, where, however, his seditious conduct had earned him three terms of imprisonment. At the

expiration of his third sentence he had been reduced to the rank of Lieutenant, and sent in disgrace to Cape Juby, where, it was thought, he could do less harm than anywhere else.

For perhaps ten minutes Guarner talked, whilst the others listened in a strained silence. And then he stopped, he rose, and a babel of voices broke out. I seized the opportunity to ask Burguete what it was all about. 'Two officers have been shot by the King's orders at Jaca, in the north of Spain,' he shouted into my ear. 'Captain Guarner has been giving us his idea of what will happen in our country, what should, what must, be done.' His voice took on a sterner note. 'We will put him, Alphonso, against a wall before long,' he went on. 'He, too, shall face a firing squad.' I felt a touch on my arm, and, turning, saw Guarner, who held out his hand. As I took it, 'Things are serious,' he said. 'Those officers, they were known to many of us. The King shall pay for this.' It was amazing, appalling. Here was a revolution in embryo, a republic in the making. I looked around me, saw the royal crown upon the tunics of these men, felt as well as saw the rage and hatred in their faces, and, in that instant, knew that, whatever the immediate outcome of the revolt at Jaca, the days of the monarchy in Spain were numbered. For surely there could be no survival for a King whose military representatives so passionately desired his downfall and his death!

Guarner left the room, accompanied by his brother, who, as Commander of the Camel Corps, wore native dress, and several other officers. The remainder spread out a little, and I found a vacant chair next to Burguete. Franco's friend now took the floor, conversation ceased, and he began to speak. For two long hours he went on, pacing continuously the fifteen feet of space between door and opposite wall, pausing only to light cigarettes one from another, throwing the ends upon the pockmarked floor. His voice rose and fell; now he literally foamed at the mouth, now gesticulated, now fixed the company with a baleful stare. I found myself becoming hypnotised by his incessant pacing up and down, by the cadences of his harsh voice. I looked at my companions, and saw that one and all sat motionless, save for their eyes, which followed his every movement. There was one final burst of rhetoric, a crescendo of sound, he spat violently, strode to the door, passed through, and slammed it behind him. For some seconds no one stirred, and then, as if a spell had been broken, we looked at each other, I, who had understood not one word of the oration, most

terribly aware of its significance, and shocked beyond measure at my knowledge. My feelings must have shown plainly in my face, for Burguete leaned towards me, and spoke very gently. 'My dear friend, you are not Spanish, and cannot understand.' I could say nothing, could only nod foolishly. He got up, joined for a few minutes in the general discussion which had now recommenced, and then took his departure. His going was the signal for the break-up of the meeting, and, by ones and twos, still talking volubly, the others left the room, till only Bengoechea remained.

Dinner that night was not a cheerful function. Even Bengoechea's sense of humour seemed temporarily at a loss, and he scarcely spoke. He did not linger long over his coffee and liqueur, but, with a hand-shake, and a wry smile which better than any words expressed both his mood and his apology for it, retired to his quarters.

On the following morning I went with him to the Governor's office, where we found a party of officers discussing the salvaging of the machine which had been abandoned near Villa Cisneros. A cruiser had been sent from Spain for this purpose, and there was a question whether, with the high seas that were reported to be running on that part of the coast, men could be landed in numbers large enough to render them immune from attack.

The talk then reverted to the events in Spain, and continued for the space of an hour, with the Governor as the chief prophet of the coming revolution. The room was dark and gloomy, for the window shutters were closed against the sun's rays, and the unkempt appearance of all those present intensified the wholly sinister atmosphere of the scene. The only word which I could recognise was the King's name, which was mentioned very frequently and with indescribable venom in every syllable. It struck me, too, that there was no dissentient voice, that with one accord the officers of the garrison wished him ill. As I walked to the Mess with Burguete before luncheon, I put both these points to him. He told me that there was not an officer, not a man, in Cape Juby, who wished the Monarchy to survive. 'And why,' I asked him, 'is the King himself so hated?' 'He is an evil man,' he replied, 'one who exploits his people for his own ends.' He looked at me intently, and I could not doubt his fanatical belief in the merits of the cause he was upholding. 'The financial grant for the Air Force in Spain,' he continued, 'is as large, relatively to our national needs and resources, as that of any country in Europe. But before it reaches us the money has to pass through the hands of interests largely owned by

the King himself, and at the end there is so little left that we have to be content with aeroplanes which are scarcely safe to fly, when our lives are dependent upon their reliability. This is, in itself, a small thing, perhaps, since it affects only the Air Force, but it is a symptom of the disease of royal monopolies, of bribery and corruption in high places, which is rife throughout Spain, and which is killing the spirit of her people. The King is absolute, his word is law. Did you know this, my friend, that during the war against the Riff a regiment of infantry were sent into action with only their bayonets for self-defence? They had been deprived of their cartridges by the King's order, because the regiment had incurred his displeasure, and because it was thus that he chose to punish them! What chance had they in such a country, and against such an enemy? There were no survivors; that regiment, which contained so many of our friends and relatives, was utterly destroyed! His voice shook with emotion. 'In the Middle Ages,' he went on, 'such things could be, but this is the twentieth century, and they cannot be tolerated!'

That was a week of hourly indignation meetings, of the hatching of many plots against the throne and person of King Alphonso XIII. The news from Spain, all censored at the source, reached the outpost by wireless from Las Palmas, and was by then so garbled, so distorted, that none knew where truth began and fiction ended. Thus we heard one day that Madrid was in ruins, burning from the shells of the Artillery, who had risen in support of the Air Force. Burguete had the two squadron machines brought out from the hangar and their engines run, to the accompaniment of deafening reports which suggested extremely irregular firing of the twelve cylinders. He wished, he told me, to be ready to leave for Spain at a moment's notice if the situation should demand it. It was not until much later that we learned that Franco's ultimatum and melodramatic flight had ended in ignominious internment in Portugal. During these days I was deeply sorry, in spite of my constitutional loathing of their principles, for the men around me, who could only curse the fate which made them mere spectators of momentous events whose details were blurred beyond recognition by distance. To their restless longings for action were added grave anxieties for the safety of their families, and their lot must indeed have been difficult to bear.

It was pleasant to escape one night from the turmoil of talk, of proposal and counter-proposal, supposition and counter-supposition,

to the peace and quiet of Vidal's house. Captain Guarner was the only other guest for dinner, and as we greeted each other I was afraid that the evening was to be spent in the usual discussion of the current news from Spain. But Guarner seemed anxious to avoid any reference to these matters, and, whilst we ate, talked of music and literature, of horses and dogs, of wines and their proper appreciation. This was the first time that I had had an opportunity of talking to him apart from his fellows, and I realised that he was a man of the world, a scholar, and a connoisseur of many things. With the coffee he began to tell us about the Moors, of whose history, habits, and customs he had made a special study. 'But I know nothing,' he said. 'No one knows anything of the Moors; they are the most mysterious people in the world. This country here, the Rio de Oro, and Mauretania, to the south, are unknown save for a narrow strip along the coast.' He spoke of the Sultan of Morocco, a French nominee, of the Moorish ruling house it was true, but chosen for his amenability to French policy. 'He is only a figurehead,' said Guarner. 'The Moors do not recognise him as their leader. The real Sultan is here, in the Rio de Oro. The French call him the Shadow Sultan, because he is never seen, or the Sulttan Bleu, because he wears always a blue *burnous*. His father, Ma el Ainin, died not many years ago at the great age of 110. The Moors believed that he could work miracles, and there are many well-substantiated stories of his exceptional powers. A son was born to him when he was in his hundredth year.' He paused a moment, and then, 'Quelle puissance formidable!' he exclaimed, an apt comment, I thought, upon this extraordinary feat.

With an infectious enthusiasm in his eyes and voice, he went on to speak of Aouina, situated some 230 kilometres east of the Wad Draa, where was a Moorish burial ground, and where secret religious rites were practised. Only one white man had ever visited it, a Jew who, disguised as a native, succeeded in probing some of its mysteries before his masquerade was discovered, when he escaped with his life only by the grace of God. Guarner sat silent for a little space, and then, in thrilling and vibrant tones, he said, 'I would give my right hand to see that place!'

On the Sunday night I went out on to the aerodrome with Vidal and his crew, to watch the arrival of the Aeropostale machine for Dakar. It was nine o'clock, the night was fine, the moonless sky ablaze with stars. Night-landings are always impressive, but in

that desert place this one had about it a romantic beauty which brought a catch to the breath. The pilot taxied to where we waited, came to a standstill, switched off his engine. Instantly the two French mechanics and the handful of native assistants threw themselves upon the machine, and flung open the door of the mail compartment. I rubbed my eyes in astonishment. Lying upon the pile of letters and packages was a Moor, who proceeded in a leisurely manner to raise himself to his feet, and to climb down to the ground with every evidence of having been rudely awakened from a refreshing sleep! No sooner was he out of the way than the mail was dragged out into a heap upon the sand, and sorting operations of incredible swiftness began. I turned to Vidal, who was talking to the pilot and the one passenger, and pointing to the Moor, who was now sitting near the tail of the machine, said, 'What was *he* doing in the mail compartment?' 'Oh, we always carry a native interpreter on the Rio de Oro section of our route,' he replied. 'For three years now, since the murder of the crew of one of our machines of which I told you, this has been our custom. If there is a forced landing, and our men are captured, the interpreter explains to his compatriots that their lives are of great value. Several have been saved from death in this way.'

We all went inside a small building which contained the Company's wireless installation, where the pilot, his mechanic, and the passenger, who was a Spanish officer on his way to join the garrison at Villa Cisneros, partook of coffee, sandwiches, and slabs of chocolate. To my enquiry as to whether passengers were often carried, the pilot replied that there was seldom room for them, since the mail was the chief consideration. Women were *never* carried, because, if they were captured, they would not be seen again. 'Their fate would be far worse than death,' he said.

The time was up. 'Il faut partir, n'est-ce-pas?' cried Vidal. All was suddenly bustle and efficiency, and in a few minutes all sight and sound of the machine and its crew were lost. The night had swallowed them.

A small pile of letters and packages lay upon the sand. Vidal stooped over it for a moment, straightened himself, handed me a square wooden box. 'Your spare parts,' he said, with a bow.

Hills spent the next day in fitting these new parts. It was a tedious business, for he had to cover the engine with rags as he worked lest the fine sand which still blew everywhere should settle on the cylinder walls and pistons. By dusk that evening, however,

he had finished, and we gave the engine a thorough ground test.

On the following morning we said all our farewells, tinged, on our side at least, with regret, for we had been treated with the greatest kindness.

After luncheon Vidal and a crowd of officers accompanied us to the machine. A white-bearded Moor approached me, and spoke rapidly in his own tongue. 'He wishes to go with you,' explained Vidal, 'to act as interpreter.' I had a spare seat, and for a moment I was tempted to accept his offer. And then, as I looked at him, I saw a picture of myself arriving in London, with the old Moor still clinging, limpet-like, to his new employer. This risk, I felt, was greater than the risk of capture, and I waved him away.

There were warm handshakes, mutual compliments. We took off, circled high above the group of men upon the aerodrome, and dived low past them in salute. As we flew northwards I looked back continually until that little world of Cape Juby, its plots, its hopes, its fears, its tragic solitude, had faded into the haze of afternoon.

Three hours and ten minutes later we landed at Agadir.

THE POODLE OF THE PRINCESS ALBERONI.

BY FRANCIS BEEDING.

§ 1

DID I ever tell you the story of Madame Entremont and the poodle of the Princess Alberoni? It was but a drawing-room affair. I had, upon my word, forgotten it these fifty years, and in so doing I was, as it happens, only obeying the orders of the Emperor himself—as you shall see. But there can be no harm in remembering it now.

It was your little *Caniche*, Suzanne, who put me in mind of it. I have been amusing myself this afternoon watching him at his tricks. He is clever, your little *Caniche*, and I see you have taught him a trick with a story to it, if you did but know—I mean when he gives three barks for the Emperor and stands on his hind legs as stiffly as a grenadier of the Old Guard. But I do not think he will be of such good service to your Napoleon III as the poodle of Princess Alberoni was to his uncle.

Yes, Gaston, you may put another log on the fire, and I will tell you about it. And you may also pour me out another glass of Burgundy. That is the wine for a soldier, old or young—the only wine the Emperor ever drank, and '44 was an excellent year.

What is that, Suzanne? . . . You want to know what the poodle did for the great Napoleon. But that is the end of the story and not the beginning.

I was a Major in those days, and had just returned with the rest of the army from the victorious campaign that ended in the battle of Wagram. You have often heard me tell you of that fight, and of how I was wounded at Znaim a few days later. Wagram, you remember, was where Masséna went into battle in a carriage, drawn by four horses, for he had been wounded, and could not bear the saddle. But that is another story.

In November, 1809, I was appointed to the staff of the Prince of Essling. As aide-de-camp to the Prince you may imagine I had my entries everywhere in Paris, and Paris in December, 1809, and the first months of 1810 was very gay. We had just returned from

yet another brilliant campaign, and a large part of the army had already been warned for service in Portugal and Spain. So we were making the most of the time between. Never have I seen Paris gayer than during that winter—banquets and balls every day, both at Court and in the private houses of the great men of the Empire. The Emperor ordered his marshals to be gay, and he paid them to be lavish. He said it was good for trade and that it kept up the spirits of the nation. And that, it seems, was necessary, for, after the Berlin decrees trade in France was not what it ought to have been.

Imagine then, all the big people in Paris and those who pretended to be big, rivalling each other in the magnificence of their entertainments, and imagine your old grandfather, young in those days and without too much in his pocket, having the time of his life. Why, I hardly had to pay for a meal, and that was a consideration, let me tell you, when every franc had to be devoted to equipping oneself for the next campaign.

Of all the entertainments, the most magnificent and popular were the fancy-dress balls given by the Princess Alberoni. She was the wife of the Italian Ambassador. The Emperor, as you know, was King of Italy in those days, and his stepson Eugène was reigning as viceroy. The Prince Alberoni was thus accredited to Napoleon's Court as Ambassador of the viceroy of Italy. He lived in a magnificent house in the Champs Elysées, at the corner of the Avenue Montaigne.

The Princess, who was a charming woman, kept a number of dogs, poodles for the most part, which were then coming into fashion in our society, and she named them all after the Emperor's victories. The best of them was Marengo, a fine black dog with floppy ears and a very solemn expression. There was nothing that dog could not do, and the Princess was devoted to him. He was, in fact, the apple of her eye, always carefully groomed and fed, and a special servant was detailed to look after him. He ran about just as he liked, and was allowed to wander through any room in the great house quite freely. Love me, love my dog. Everyone paid him marked attention, especially those persons frequenting the Princess Alberoni's *salon* who were a little doubtful of their invitations to the next party. And I verily believe the animal saw through it all. He was clever enough for that.

The Prince, being only a civilian, was allowed to give these fancy-dress balls I have mentioned. The etiquette for officers of

the Army was more severe. Such mummary did not become a marshal of France, but there was no such restriction on a mere ambassador ; and, as I say, the balls were popular, and no one, strangely enough, took more delight in them than the Emperor himself. He would often go to them *incognito*, accompanied only by Duroc, Grand Marshal of the palace and Duke of Friuli, his closest friend. Usually they wore black dominoes and were heavily masked. The Emperor would move freely amongst the guests listening to their conversation and quizzing the ladies, of whom, needless to say, there were a large number. It was all the more amusing from his point of view, for most of the ladies unmasked fairly soon after their arrival at the ball, that is to say, all the pretty ones did so ; the others perhaps enjoyed themselves more by keeping strictly to the etiquette of the ball.

You will understand, of course, that these little escapades of the Emperor caused a certain amount of misgiving to Fouché, the Minister of Police, and that fairly elaborate precautions were taken. For example, the Prince Alberoni invariably submitted a list of all the guests he proposed to invite before the invitations were issued, and no card was sent to anyone of whom the police might disapprove. There were also a number of secret agents in the ball-room, suitably disguised, of course, and a battalion of the Old Guard was on duty round the *hôtel*. Each guest, moreover, was required to unmask as he presented his card of invitation at the door. It was, therefore, difficult to go to these balls uninvited, as I am told is the fashion amongst the unmannerly young people of to-day. Once past the door, however, the guests had no idea that they were under any form of supervision, for the police were very discreet in the ball-room.

§ 2

I received invitations to all these affairs as a matter of course in my capacity as aide-de-camp to the Prince of Essling. Some days before the last of these fancy-dress balls, which took place, if I remember rightly, late in January, 1810, I visited with my mother, some old friends of ours, whom I will call Monsieur and Madame X ; for, as they were implicated only by pure accident in the affair, and as they have numerous relatives still alive, it would be indiscreet of me to give you their names. I forget who were present at the tea-drinking, but it was quite a large party. There were Bourdigny, Dupont, Vezy and half a dozen others, all

aides like myself, and a corresponding number of ladies, amongst whom was one who attracted universal attention.

You have heard, my children, of the Amazons. This woman was almost as tall as myself, and I stood six feet four inches in those days. She was a great, strapping creature all in proportion to her height. She was not what you would call beautiful, and, alas! she would never see forty-five again. But she had lovely hair—blonde, and a great deal of it. Her gestures matched her figure. She spoke and moved like a dragoon.

Such was Madame Entremont, and I was soon to know a good deal more than I shall ever remember about her and her grievances which were, as I discovered, as large as her person.

For as bad luck would have it, she took a fancy to me—it did occasionally happen, my children, where ladies were concerned—and she poured into my ears an interminable story of her woes. She was a widow, it seemed, and the pension she drew as her husband's relict—he had been some sort of official in the Ministry of the Interior—was, according to her views, inadequate. She had repeatedly petitioned for redress, as she called it—in other words, she was asking that her pension should be doubled. That day she was especially indignant. For she had been refused, once and for all, an audience with Napoleon, to whom she wished the matter to be referred.

I did not argue with her. I just nodded from time to time, and any normal person would have realised that I only nodded because I must. But Madame Entremont seemed to think that I had for her a genuine sympathy. Soon I grew tired of nodding, and by way of a diversion I asked whether she was going to the ball of the Princess Alberoni, which was to take place in a few days' time. That again was unfortunate. It seemed that she fully intended to go to the ball, and had, in fact, boldly written to Princess Alberoni, requesting an invitation on the ground that she was the widow of a public man. The Princess, in the kindness of her heart, had sent her a card, but, as I discovered later, had only done so at the last moment, so that the name of Madame Entremont did not appear on the list of guests submitted to the police. Otherwise she would certainly not have been admitted, being a *mauvais sujet*.

She talked loudly of the ball, and when she discovered that I also was going, she even more loudly praised her own good fortune. We should be able, she said, to go to the ball together. She knew

but few people in Paris, and doubted whether she would find any friends among the Ambassador's guests.

'But now that I have so handsome an escort,' said she, 'my success at the ball will be assured.'

I am merely repeating what she said, you understand, and I need hardly assure you that it filled me with dismay.

§ 3

It was two days later, I think, that I found myself on duty at the Tuileries. I had come to the palace with Masséna, who was seeing the Emperor that morning about the new campaign in Portugal. Our armies in the Peninsula were not at that time doing as well as we had expected. We had, in fact, suffered more than one reverse at the hands of my Lord Wellesley. This Wellesley was, as perhaps you know, an English general—the one that was made a Duke shortly before his rescue by Blücher at Waterloo. It was now being proposed that we should send Masséna, the darling child of victory, to try a turn with the Englishman, and to effect the conquest of Portugal.

I was lounging in one of the ante-rooms with several of the Emperor's *aides*. There were three or four of us, grouped in an embrasure of the window, and we were looking out on the new Rue de Rivoli, and playing 'Beaver.' It was a silly game, but we all played it at the time. You just waited for the men as they passed and bet on 'whiskers' or 'no whiskers.' Whiskers, you know, were *de rigueur* in those days except for civilians, though Soult and Bernadotte wore none.

I had just won two Napoleons off Vezy, I remember, when we heard a commotion on the stairs outside, and the sound of a high-pitched voice, which for the moment I did not recognise. We turned as one man, and there before us was one of the Emperor's chamberlains evidently trying to prevent someone from entering the room. He had his face to the enemy, but was in full retreat, and almost at once the invader appeared.

Imagine my dismay. The chamberlain was a small man, and at that moment I wished devoutly I had not myself been quite so large and obvious. For this was my fair encounter of two days before. She was wearing a blue velvet hat perched on the back of her head, and a dress of yellow taffeta, cut low in the back and front, with long black gloves. She seemed about eight feet high, and with her yellow frock and her sallow skin, looked like one of

those statues which the First Consul brought back from Egypt in '99. She was driving the wretched chamberlain before her, and, whenever he paused, she placed a mighty hand on his chest. Her advance was irresistible. The poor man had no time to form square. The heavy cavalry was upon him, and when at last she steered him into a footstool, he fell flat on his back and left us face to face with his assailant.

She waved a white card in the air with an ample gesture.

'Where,' she demanded, 'is the Emperor?'

For a moment we all stood silent in astonishment. Then I drew back a pace into the window. I seldom move into cover, but this was not an ordinary emergency. It was a fatal step, my children. Never flinch before the enemy. It is better to stand your ground, come what may. She saw me at once. She smiled. At least I think it was a smile.

'Major de Blanchegarde,' she said, coming at me with her hand extended. 'This is most fortunate. I have, as you see, permission to visit the Emperor. You will perhaps be good enough to conduct me to His Majesty.'

She held out the white card as she spoke, the card which was issued from the Office of Duroc to persons who had been granted an audience. I glanced hurriedly to left and right. Would you believe it, my children? I was alone. Not a man in sight. The cowards. . . . Mechanically I put out my hand. She thrust the card into it. I glanced at it, then up at her where she stood tapping a gigantic heel on the blue carpet sewn with golden bees.

'Madame,' I said, and I hoped that my voice was firm, 'this card is a month old.'

'I am aware of that, Major de Blanchegarde,' said she. 'But it is not my fault if the Emperor is badly served. The card is a month old because His Majesty should have seen me a month ago.'

'I am sorry, Madame,' I said, 'but I'm afraid I'm not in a position to be of any assistance to you. This is a matter for the personal *aides* of His Majesty.'

I looked savagely round as I spoke to the embrasure in which Vezy and his friends were presumably in ambush.

She took no notice of my observation, but with a look that might have felled an ordinary man, she moved suddenly forward towards the door leading to the Emperor's private apartments.

Vezy, never so heroic as in that critical moment, sprang from his hiding-place, and the chamberlain, who had by now succeeded

in getting to his feet, pattered after her. She was within three paces of the door, however, when it suddenly opened and Masséna appeared on the threshold. He was in uniform and looked graver than usual. He realised, none better, the responsibilities of the campaign in front of him. The Amazon halted a moment at the sight of him, and then made as though to push him aside. His eyebrows went up, and he beckoned me with a slight gesture.

'Who is this?' he asked, with his strong accent of the *midi*.

'It is Madame Entremont, Monseigneur,' I answered hastily. 'She wishes to see the Emperor.'

'I *insist* on seeing the Emperor,' she corrected, in no way abashed by the presence of a marshal of France. She even thrust out her large hand, so that, for a terrible moment, I thought she was going to treat him as she had treated the chamberlain. Masséna drew back a pace—fortunately there was no stool; then with a smile bowed to her courteously and stepped briskly to one side. Madame Entremont swept through the door, while the *aides* all stood aghast. Masséna, however, seemed quite unruffled, and stood gently pulling at his grizzled moustache.

We had no time to wonder what would happen, for a moment later there she appeared again, in a whirlwind of yellow silk, glaring with hot eyes at the smiling Marshal.

'The Emperor is not there,' she said. 'What have you done with him?'

Masséna bowed again.

'I'm sorry, Madame,' he replied. 'His Majesty has just left in his coach for Fontainebleau.'

Through the open window, as he spoke, came the clatter of hoofs and the jingle of harness, followed, a moment later, by the rumble of wheels and a faint sound of cheering in the streets.

Madame Entremont turned upon us in a fury.

'This time,' she exclaimed, 'he has escaped me. Next time he will be less successful.'

She turned round abruptly and flounced from the room, not pausing to look again at any of us.

Vezy sighed with relief, and mopped his forehead. Masséna looked after her quietly, and then, turning to us, tapped the side of his head with his forefinger.

'Poor creature,' he murmured. 'But I am glad the Emperor left by the other door. Who on earth let her in? She might have proved . . . difficult.'

§ 4.

I set out for the Princess Alberoni's ball at about nine in the evening. I was in good spirits that day. My preparations for the coming campaign were well advanced, and I had, in particular, been lucky enough to buy cheaply an admirable mare from Count Canisy, who was in charge of the Emperor's stables. It was, therefore, with a light heart that I presented myself at the *hôtel*.

The place was brilliantly lighted and surrounded, as I have already said, by a battalion of the Old Guard, in their blue and white uniforms and tall bearskins. All the guests were in fancy dress, but I had contented myself with wearing a blue silk domino over my mess uniform. It is not fitting, I maintained, and still do maintain, for soldiers on active service to dress themselves up like puppets or waxworks. Besides, the Emperor wore a domino, and there were many who followed his example.

I walked up the marble steps between a double row of lackeys in the livery of the Prince, green and silver. I was met at the door by the major-domo, to whom I handed my card of invitation, at the same time removing my mask for the benefit of two unobtrusive individuals who stood at the entrance, disguised as Scottish chieftains. It is a curious dress, my children, and one which does not become the French. They wore green skirts with lines running at right angles on them, and the bearskin instead of being worn upon the head was strung about the waist where it hung like an apron almost to the knees. They were two of Fouché's men, and, knowing me well by sight, they let me pass immediately.

I moved slowly into the ball-room. Although I had come fairly early, the crush was already great. The room itself was magnificent, and lit by a large number of blown-glass chandeliers from Venice, containing hundreds of wax candles, which in themselves sufficed to overheat the room. Seldom have I seen more magnificent costumes. Everyone was in silk or velvet, and many of the ladies carried great fans and wore head-dresses of plumes.

I stood for a moment or two near the door, watching the dancers, for a quadrille was in progress. The orchestra was playing in a little musicians' gallery hidden by a fantastically designed mirror so that it appeared that the music came from the reflection—a pleasing conceit. It was, as I have said, a brilliant scene and, without a care in the world, I was promising to enjoy myself to the full.

But suddenly my doom was upon me. Among the dancers near the orchestra I became aware of a commotion as when a pike swims into a shoal of little fishes, and before I could quite make out the cause of it, there came sailing through the midst of them a figure that could belong to only one person that I knew. She was wearing a simple robe of white calico, with a red corsage, the whole confection being covered with little bits of variegated ribbon. She was masked, of course, but I had no difficulty in recognising Madame Entremont. I have already told you of her hair. She had chosen this costume apparently to set it off, for she wore it in two long plaits reaching almost to the knees. Perched on the top of her head, at a rakish angle, was a little straw hat, worn over one ear, and secured by a large pin. The simplicity of this costume among the silk and velvet of the other guests and the great size of the creature wearing it attracted universal attention. By a most unfortunate mischance, I had taken off my mask, and was fanning myself with it when I first perceived her. I, at once, made to adjust it, but it was too late.

'It is Major de Blanchegarde,' she said, and came at me like one of Nansouty's cuirassiers. Everyone looked in my direction, and there was some tittering among the guests. I was red, as I knew, to the ears.

'I have at last a cavalier,' she continued. 'I have also a bad thirst. You shall lead me to the buffet.'

I do not know how long it took us to get clear of the ball-room—years, it seemed to me. But at last we reached a buffet in a side room, and I was then able to note that the thirst of Madame Entremont was proportionate to her voice and stature. She drank champagne as a charger drinks water at the end of a day's march.

My children, I swear it was an accident. Madame Entremont was six feet four; she was dressed to provoke attention; she had made of me the most conspicuous man in all that assembly. But even so, I did not wilfully abandon her, no, not though she went so far as to propose that we should return to the ball-room and waltz together. I knew well what was in store, but I was prepared to face it.

Relief, however, came from an unexpected quarter. I had bowed formally to Madame Entremont, and we had moved as far as the entrance to the ball-room, when I saw a number of men dressed as pages of the time of Henry IV moving rapidly round the room.

I recognised them immediately. They were the secretaries of Prince Alberoni.

'The Prince requests all his guests to put on their masks,' they were saying. 'The Emperor is at hand.'

I bowed again to Madame Entremont.

'I am sorry,' I said, 'I have left my mask on a table near the buffet. I beg you to excuse me for just one moment.'

I hastily returned to the buffet, found my mask and—less hastily, perhaps—made my way back towards the ball-room. Madame Entremont was not, however, where I had left her. I will not say that I looked for her with diligence. I will not swear that I even entered the ball-room. I had, you understand, no wish to dance. I accordingly climbed the broad staircase with its bronze balustrade to the first floor and entered the gaming-rooms. Play was running high, and alas! I could not afford to lose a franc at that stage of my career. So, being the sort of man that can resist anything except temptation, I wandered away from the tables and retired to a little *salon*, half in darkness, where there was but a single alabaster lamp on the table. There I sank into a comfortable chair and took off my mask. A passing footman brought me an excellent sorbet. It was not the evening I had anticipated, but my partner had deserted me, and I had no desire to be intrusive. Soon, perhaps, I would go down again and if she were no longer there, console myself with another and smaller partner. Meanwhile, I would rest in this pleasant corner.

I had not been there more than ten minutes, however, when two men, rather short and wearing black dominoes and black masks, entered the little salon.

'We can avoid the crowd here,' said one of them.

Then, noticing me, he beckoned and called to me imperiously by name. I could not see who it was, the man being masked, but there were few men who would have ventured to summon me in that way. I rose and moved towards him.

'I am Duroc,' he said at once. 'This is the Emperor.'

He indicated the second masked man with a slight gesture of his right hand.

'His Majesty,' he continued, 'is tired and somewhat overcome by the heat. He wishes to rest a moment here. You will, therefore, remain with me near the door, and keep off anyone who may happen to enter.'

I bowed and said nothing.

The Emperor crossed the room, laying his hand on my shoulder as he passed.

'It is very hot,' he said, as he sat down in an arm-chair in one of the angles of the room.

The Emperor, as I think I have told you, was a brilliant conversationalist.

Duroc and myself took up two other chairs and arranged them so as to screen the Emperor as far as possible. We then sat down facing the doorway. Duroc kept his mask, but conversed freely with me as though we had been old comrades. We talked about the last campaign, and he referred incidentally to my exploit at M \ddot{o} lk and of the Emperor's pleasure that so gallant a soldier had survived it. Of course, I am only telling you what he said.

Presently Napoleon called out. I turned round, but Duroc was instantly at his side.

'You have the handkerchiefs?' said the Emperor.

'Here, sire,' answered Duroc, and he produced two white silk handkerchiefs, with which the Emperor wiped his face and neck. Then he beckoned to me.

'De Blanchegarde,' he said. 'Be good enough to get me a large glass of iced water.'

I bowed and sped from the room. The slightest service to the Emperor, you understand, was an honour. I thought it best to go to the buffet downstairs, since I did not know my way about the *h \acute{o} tel*, and did not want to keep the Emperor waiting. I accordingly found the *salon* to which I had previously conducted Madame Entremont, where I obtained the water. Two men approached me as I was leaving the *salon*. They were the two members of the secret police whom I had seen before at the door in the curious costume of the Scots.

One of them whispered as I passed:

'Is Major de Blanchegarde prepared to guarantee the purity of the water he is carrying in that tumbler?'

'I think so,' I answered. 'I took it from one of the many carafes standing on that table over there.'

The men nodded and passed on.

Yes, my children, the Emperor was well guarded, and it was indeed very necessary to be careful.

The Emperor received the water with such pleasure that I thought he must be very thirsty. To my surprise, however, he drank only a small mouthful, and then, wetting the handkerchiefs

one by one in the iced water, he asked me to put one of them on the nape of his neck, while he himself took the other and placed it on his face. When we had done this he repeated several times :

‘That is good . . . that is good.’

At a sign from Duroc I returned to my post by the door. I had hardly reached it, however, when I heard a heavy rustle of draperies and there, suddenly on the threshold, stood Madame Entremont.

For a moment we were motionless, neither of us speaking. The Emperor had hastily pressed the handkerchief over his face so that it completely covered him.

‘At last, Monsieur,’ she exclaimed.

‘Madame,’ I said quickly, in order that there should be no misunderstanding. ‘I was beginning to fear that you had abandoned me.’

From the corner of my eye I could see Duroc, beside the Emperor in the shadow, signalling me to take the lady away.

‘I do not abandon my friends,’ she said in that great voice of hers.

‘Indeed,’ said I. ‘Then perhaps I may claim the dance for which I was hoping.’

I hoped the Emperor would realise the extent of my devotion.

‘It is suffocating in the ball-room,’ she replied. ‘Let us rather rest here a moment. The night is still young. You shall have your dance later, Major de Blanchegarde.’

So saying, she descended upon the chair left vacant by Duroc who was standing by the Emperor and beckoned me imperiously to seat myself at her side. What could I do? It was no use Duroc doing his signalling exercises in the corner. While Madame Entremont sat there completely blocking the only exit from the *salon*, the Emperor, whom she was so anxious to see, was virtually a prisoner. I sat down with the best grace I could.

She leaned towards me, nodding her large head with its absurd hat, secured by what I now perceived to be an Italian stiletto of very slender workmanship, scarcely larger, in fact, than a hatpin.

‘I am waiting for *him*,’ she said.

My heart stood still.

‘He is sure to be at the ball,’ she went on. ‘He always comes to these parties. All the world knows it. He has no manners at all—the little Corsican, and is glad of a chance to be free of the

etiquette which he imposes on us all. I shall see him to-night and at last I shall have justice.'

Her eyes were bright, and had a glassy look. Her fingers were twitching on the fan she carried.

I looked at her in dismay, remembering the comment of Masséna. The poor creature was obviously crazy with her grievances—and, not to put too fine a point upon it, my children, she had visited, more than once I am afraid, the buffet to which I had introduced her earlier in the evening. Brandy, it seemed, on the top of all that champagne.

I waved my handkerchief in the air.

'Justice,' I echoed, completely at a loss. 'The Emperor is always just.'

'He has twice refused to see me,' she continued. 'Either he shall give me satisfaction to-night or he shall pay the penalty. I have waited long enough. I shall ask once again for redress. He will again refuse. He has the obstinacy of a pig—this Bonaparte.'

I liked this less than ever. For one thing it was distinctly compromising. The Emperor must be wondering what sort of company I was in the habit of keeping.

'Madame,' I said, 'you do not know me well—scarcely at all in fact—or you would know that you are talking to a loyal subject of the Emperor. I beg you to control yourself.'

She looked at me with a venomous contempt, and it was then that it just crossed my mind that she was not only grotesque but might possibly be dangerous.

'Shame on you, Major de Blanchegarde,' she exclaimed. 'Is it possible that a gentleman of France can have fallen so low as to become the servant of this Corsican butcher? But, of course, you are one of them—one of his hired slaughterers. But it cannot last, I tell you. All Europe will rise against him and even the besotted slaves who follow him will one day weary of cutting throats for his pleasure.'

I stared at her aghast. She was—I was sure of it now—quite crazy. There was foam about the corners of her mouth, and I thought she was about to have some sort of fit. The situation was intolerable. I rose to my feet.

'Madame,' I said with all the composure that I could command. 'You are not well; you must allow me to conduct you to your carriage.'

She paid me no attention.

'Madame,' I said again, and stretching out my hand, I touched her on the shoulder. She sprang to her feet, her eyes flashing through the holes of her mask.

I do not know what she would have said or done. She was obviously quite beside herself, and seemed about to attack me. For one instant I imagined myself involved in a shameful scuffle, calling, perhaps, for help, so that I might master her without unseemly violence. At that moment, however, came a light patter of feet, and a large black poodle trotted round the corner of the door. He was a beautiful creature, wearing a bright-coloured ribbon round his neck, Marengo, the famous poodle of the Princess Alberoni and the apple of her eye. He trotted briskly into the room, but paused on seeing us, cocking his head on one side to get a better view.

At that moment I felt a touch on my arm. Duroc was standing at my elbow, the Emperor a pace behind him.

'We are going immediately,' whispered Duroc. 'See that the woman does not follow us.'

They moved forward together as he spoke.

I turned to Madame Entremont.

'Yes, Madame,' I said hastily, 'that is Marengo—a beautiful creature, is he not?'

But to my horror Madame was not looking at the dog. She was staring at the two masked figures which were moving out of the *salon*.

I found my arm imprisoned in a grip of steel.

'It is the Emperor,' she exclaimed, 'the Emperor and his jackal.'

She released me and moved forward as she spoke. I sprang after her, and seized her by the left arm.

'Madame,' I said.

She turned round and with the open palm of her right hand caught me such a buffet on the face as I hope never to receive again. I had come scathless through the charge of the chasseurs of the Guard at Austerlitz. My encounter with the Saxon aide-de-camp at Jena when my sabre broke off short at the hilt was a poor moment. But all that was as nothing. I fell backwards across the chair. My assailant did not even stay to look at me, but made at once after the Emperor.

I still did not grasp the situation. I feared at most a disagreeable scene with which, however, I was sure that the Emperor would be

able to cope. But as I struggled to my feet, being all mixed up in that infernal chair, I suddenly perceived with horror that she had plucked from her hat the stiletto which secured it to her hair.

I could never have got to him in time. The woman was mad—stark mad. And she was armed. The Emperor was unprotected, Duroc being on the far side of him.

‘It is useless to plead for justice,’ she screamed. ‘But I will have revenge.’

Then, as the Emperor continued to withdraw :

‘Turn, Napoleon,’ she roared.

The Emperor turned. She was almost upon him.

It was then that I saw the poodle Marengo. He was in the space between them.

At the word ‘Napoleon,’ he had instantly risen upon his hind legs and there he stood stiff as a ramrod, full in the path of the mad creature, one of his paws held to his forehead at the salute. For that was the attitude he at once assumed whenever he heard the sacred name of the Emperor.

Madame Entremont did not pause. She did not even see the obstacle. Her feet went either side of him so that he was caught in the swell of her long skirt. She tripped and stumbled, snatching at her skirt with one hand, but still holding the stiletto in the other. I had by this time got free of the confounded chair into which she had pushed me. I scrambled to my feet, my face burning from the blow I had received. I sprang forward and laid hold of her, just as Duroc, his face grown suddenly white behind the mask, thrust himself in front of the Emperor.

The colossus in my arms swayed like a tree in the wind. But I hung on to her doggedly, though my arms were almost torn from their sockets. It was as much as I could do to hold her, and I could certainly never have mastered her.

Reinforcements, however, were at hand. There was a shrill barking on my right flank. Marengo was coming into action. The dog leapt at her, and, seizing a piece of her skirt in his teeth, thrust out his four legs into the thick carpet and stood firm. Something was bound to give way. There was a rending sound, and a large section of the white calico skirt parted from the red corsage. The gallant poodle wasted no time worrying his trophy, but sprang again at such of the skirt as remained. There was another sound of tearing. Madame Entremont’s extravagant costume was in ruins ; in a moment she would be standing there in her shift.

She gave a howl of fury, and, twisting round in my arms, she dealt me a savage blow with the stiletto. I bear the mark to this day, a little scar high up on the right shoulder. Her face as she turned upon me was terrible to behold. Her mask had slipped and her bloodshot eyes glared balefully into mine. Tears of rage drove furrows through the rouge and powder on her cheeks. It was the face of a maniac.

The struggle did not last more than a moment. Strong hands had gripped her, and she was borne backwards. The two police agents dressed as Scots had appeared, and aided by another of their kidney, in the guise of a Roman centurion, they had her on the floor and in a trice had bound her wrists and ankles with the strips of her own skirt, lying in shreds on the carpet.

Marengo was delighted with these proceedings, and scampered round the struggling group barking loudly and wagging his tail as is the manner of successful dogs. I believe he knew very well what he had done. Many have received the cross for less.

The Emperor had not stirred. Silently he watched the agents of the police as they secured and gagged his assailant. At last, however, he stepped forward.

'Duroc,' he said, 'this lady has fainted. See that she is carried out without exciting the attention of the other guests. And remember, all of you, when you leave this room, the incident is forgotten.'

'You hear that?' said Duroc to the agents. 'The people of France would tremble if they should learn how near to death his Majesty had been.'

The agents withdrew with their burden.

The Emperor turned to Duroc with a smile.

'You are wrong, Duroc,' he said. 'The people of France would not tremble. They would laugh. They laugh at everything—these Frenchmen—but they do not laugh at me. That is the secret of my power. No one has yet laughed at Napoleon.'

There was a movement behind us, and we all three looked round.

The inevitable had happened. At the word 'Napoleon' Marengo, whom we had for the moment forgotten, had come to attention. He was standing stiffly up on his hind legs, his bright eyes expectantly on the Emperor.

The Emperor considered him a moment, then broke with one of his rare winning smiles. He took a step forward, stooped and took the little creature by the ear.

You know this gesture, my children. The Emperor had taken

me by the ear on one or two occasions, but it had happened also to other men. Marengo, so far as I know, was the only member of his species to be thus distinguished. His small body quivered with loyalty and pride.

The Emperor then drew himself up, and Marengo, dropping to his forelegs, looked briskly about him.

'Major de Blanchegarde'—it was the Emperor speaking—'you will report to me at ten o'clock to-morrow morning at the Tuileries.'

'At ten, sire,' said I.

The heavy blue velvet curtains fell together over the door. I was alone with Marengo, who was looking at me, I swear, with intelligent commiseration. Happily, however, he had less cause to pity me than we either of us imagined. For the Emperor had no thought of scolding me for my part in the affair. He had, on the contrary, a mission for me to perform which was to beg Marengo from his mistress as a gift for the new Empress Marie Louise.

Madame Entremont? . . . Alas! poor lady, she died about a year later, hopelessly insane, in the great hospital of the Salpêtrière.

MRS. BROWNING AND HER FATHER'S
FORGIVENESS.

BY LEONARD HUXLEY.

THAT remarkable play, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, stirred up warm debate not only concerning the strange character of Mrs. Browning's father, but also as to the ethics of the literary distortions which were employed to heighten the dramatic interest—distortions historically unpardonable and personally offensive. All of us agree, however, in finding something outside the range of human sympathy in Mr. Barrett's behaviour towards his children, so despotic, so relentlessly complete and consistent, that utterly groundless theories have been invented to account for it.

To-day the discovery of an unpublished letter from Mrs. Browning to her sister Henrietta throws a little more light on the vexed question of her father's attitude towards the daughters and the son who married without his consent, while it also testifies to her own deep appreciation of the smallest concession on his part.

The letter was found recently among the papers of Henrietta's elder son, the late Rev. Altham Surtees Altham, by his son, and with his sanction communicated to me by General Sir Edward Altham, K.C.B. If it does not, after all, do very much to soften our view of the rigour with which Edward Moulton Barrett maintained the active boycott of his daughters that his pride of consistency forbade him to withdraw, at least it helps us to form a plausible conception of the workings of his mind, while Elizabeth's unquenched love for her father found in his words a sign that his heart was less hard than his fixed line of action. This was a great alleviation to her sorrow after his death; a great cause of gratitude to the person who had won this measure of grace from him.

In *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (ii. 263) Sir Frederick Kenyon sums up the situation after the death of Mrs. Browning's father on April 17, 1857.

In the course of the previous summer [1856] an attempt made by a relative to bring about a reconciliation between him and his daughters was met with the answer that they had 'disgraced his family'; and, although he professed to have 'forgiven' them,

he refused all intercourse, removed his family out of town when the Brownings came thither, and declined to give his daughter Henrietta's address to Mr. Kenyon's executor, who was instructed to pay her a small legacy. A further attempt at reconciliation was made by Mrs. Martin [a very old family friend] only a few months before his death,¹ but had no better success. His pride stood in the way of his forgiveness to the end.

The Brownings had visited England from July to October in 1855 and again in 1856, staying on the first occasion in Dorset Street, on the second at Mr. Kenyon's house in Devonshire Place, both close to the Barrett home in Wimpole Street. In 1855 it was not till late in August, more than a month after the Brownings' arrival, that Mr. Barrett despatched his family to the South Coast, with the tempting offer that 'after a time, if any of them should like to go to Paris where there is so much to see! (fancy Papa!) why they might go.' Presumably the Brownings' presence close by had been kept from him all these weeks. A house was found at Eastbourne; the family departed, and the separation was effected, though in the end only a shortage of funds prevented the Brownings from taking rooms themselves at Eastbourne so as to rejoin the beloved sister Arabel.

Again in 1856, Mrs. Browning had been quietly seeing her sister Arabel all through July and early August. Towards the end of the month Mr. Barrett found out that the Brownings were again in London and close by. 'The very day he heard of our being in Devonshire Place he gave orders that his family should go away.' Arabel and her brothers were packed off to Ventnor for a couple of months so as to keep them out of London till after Elizabeth's departure. 'I wrote afterwards,' says Mrs. Browning, 'but my letter, as usual, remained unanswered.' Nevertheless, she managed to pay a flying visit to Arabel at Ventnor on her way to see their old friend Mr. Kenyon, who was lying ill at Cowes.

Outwardly, then, Mr. Barrett was immovable. He had said that he would have nothing more to do with his disobedient daughters, and his word must be kept to the last syllable. Exclusion was the plain consequence of their act of disobedience, a consequence as inevitable, as enduring, as any material sequence once set going in the world of physical cause and effect, and like these material consequences, unaffected by merely human sentiment. Certainly his religion taught him that man is divinely

¹ Simultaneously with the other intercession, says the new letter.

commanded to forgive a personal affront, an injury to himself or to his *amour propre*; thus appealed to, it seems that the father consented to forgive such wrong as there might be towards himself, and prayed for the offenders; nevertheless, it was clear to him that here the essential wrong was an infraction of the wider, and as it were impersonal, order of things, no less established by the divine ordinance and fulfilling itself unalterably. In that order there is no forgetfulness, nothing to be swayed by 'weak pity.' Something of this kind, one imagines, must have been the process of thought in a mind like Mr. Barrett's. The personal forgiveness he was persuaded to express, as one part of his religious code, was entirely detached from the eternal law which the other side of his religion equally recognised as a part of the divinely appointed scheme of things, a scheme of universal effect which lays down the basic conditions of human life, and to which that life must conform, or be cast out.

To us, at least, it is a very difficult state of mind to reconstruct in such a case; we can hardly conceive of a middle-aged person's marriage without the parent's consent being an offence where the sinner might at last be pardoned, but the sin never; forgiveness uttered, but exclusion maintained. Yet it looks as if his stubborn pride were mixed up with a narrow religious intensity; as a father, he regarded himself as an appointed instrument to carry out unflinchingly the divine ordinance, Honour thy parents. He was the priest of the Law; it was not his doing that the way of the transgressor is hard.

From the letter it seems that the intercession which won from Mr. Barrett the word 'forgiveness' took place either just before or just after the Brownings' presence in London was discovered. In the former event it may even have led to the discovery and its sequel, the second exile of the family. No doubt, when Mrs. Browning heard that forgiveness had been so much as mentioned, she was encouraged, as she says, to write to her father once more, in spite of the new sentence of exile.

The mediator who had now dared to intervene was Mrs. Browning's Aunt Jane, Mrs. Hedley, her mother's sister. This fact immediately explains the puzzling reference to her, twice made, in the volume *Elizabeth Barrett Browning; Letters to her Sister* (pp. 272, 275), after Mr. Barrett's death in 1857: 'Never shall I forget what she did for both of us last year.' Coming especially as it did after the harsh repulse of the preceding year, the word

'forgiveness,' little as it affected the continued barrier of act and fact, brought comfort to Elizabeth's troubled spirit, so perpetually agitated by the cruel disharmony between the daughter's ideals and the father's narrow convictions. It took away much of the sense of bitterness which, strive against it as she would, continually crept in to poison her home memories.

The new letter is dated May 15, 1857, after the news of her father's death had reached Mrs. Browning.

Minnie and Crow were old and valued servants of the family. Storm, or Stormie, is E.B.B.'s brother Charles; George and Alfred, other brothers; Wilson, Mrs. Browning's faithful maid.

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning to her Sister, Henrietta
(Mrs. Surtees Cook, afterwards Altham.)*

MY BELOVED HENRIETTA, it is true that first words must be said—but it seems difficult to me to write just now—the more so that I feel as if I could write nothing to give a human soul any comfort or pleasure. *You* did, dearest, when you wrote to me. How good you are, to write so in kindness, and so considerately. Dearest, you see things as they are. We did what we could, it is true, and now God does what he can—and he manages men and spirits better than we who are nothing before him—and before ourselves too, in moments like the late ones.

I am quite well. Do not think of me except thinking that I love you, dear. Yes, I attend to Penini. Occupation is the only thing to keep one on one's feet a little, that I know well. Only it is hard sometimes to force oneself into occupation—there's the hardness—and you—you have the children, and dear Surtees; and you trust God bravely and see things as they are. I thank God for you, dearest.

Every day I expect another letter from my precious Arabel. For her plans, I would not for the world cross her, or that she should be crossed—but I so much wish that she would leave all decisions for the future and come out here for the summer with us among the mountains and get time to make up her mind quietly. They won't break everything at once in Wimpole Street—they can't, I should think, though I know nothing—but even if they did, dear Minny might stay for a few weeks or even months with *Crow* quite happily and comfortably, till things were further arranged. I don't myself think that Storm and George will ever agree to Arabel's living by herself in London. I don't think so—but I wouldn't cross her—and she for her precious part must be reasonable, will be reasonable dear darling as she

is, and not give us all up for the 'Refuge.' Still let her choose her life and be well—only be well—and we will none of us tease her and vex her—only for the first it does seem to me that she would be better here—and with you a little, you say first, for I do not forget your rights, dearest. She asks if we go to England—feeling (I am sure she does) that it is impossible for us this year—Oh no, no, I could not go to England indeed.

The summer before last, Henrietta, I made up my mind that there was *no hope* of any outward sign of forgiveness on this earth. I knew then that this which we have suffered, was before us to suffer—Yet when it came, it seemed insufferable as if unforeseen.

Just before it came Mrs. Martin wrote to tell me of a letter she wrote last August—just when dear aunt Jane wrote hers—and that it was replied to by the words that he 'had forgiven'—that he 'even prayed for our well being and well doing.'—Those were the words. Let us hold them fast, beloved Henrietta. He prayed for us. Our poor little children had so much from him. And we when we pray, may thank God for so much comfort.

I am well. Penini is good, except for his spirits which make him unmanageable sometimes, Wilson says. Early in April he began to learn music (having quite forgotten what he knew two years ago, of course) and he goes every day to a very good master in this street for half an hour's lesson—besides which he practises with Robert. We pay almost ninepence a lesson, and he gets on, Robert thinks. How is Altham's French? I do wish dear little Mary would not catch cold so often. Are you sure that that pretty garden is not damp? I sometimes hear of children suffering here from being confined to gardens with trees closely planted. Open walks agree better, they say.

I had a letter full of kindness from dearest aunt Jane, which Robert answered, and I will some day. I never shall forget one thing she did for me, and for you.

Alfred has gone, and I believe I never sent him a message, poor Alfred—and you don't say whether he went by land or water. Did he go with Lord Elgin?

Write and tell me of yourself, and of the children, and of Surtees. I take up books—but my heart goes walking up and down constantly through that house at Wimpole Street till it is tired, tired. I dare say it is much the same with yours, only you have more children and babies pull at their mother's thoughts every moment; which is good for you and happy. May God bless you and keep you all.

In that world, spirits learn and grow faster. It has been a great help to me that of later years I have apprehended more of the ways of life in that world.

May God bless you—He who holds the keys of Hades—
bless you here and there. Be happy, dearest, and write much of
yourself to your ever attached

BA.

Best love to dear Surtees and to the darlings. Peni has begun
two or three letters.

'KNOW'ST THOU THE LAND?'

THERE gleams the bright imperishable rose,
There lifts the lovely cadence of all song,
There shine forever white the virgin snows,
And there the unattempted mountains throng.

O lovely land, I hear thy voices call,
Thy changeless messengers beside me stand;
I wait the unforgotten touch to fall,
I wait to clasp a well-remembered hand.

Though exiled under sad and changing skies,
Though caught in a long dream I cannot break,
Back to thy shining seas my spirit cries,
On to thy shining seas my way I take.

M. NEWTON.

THE DRAGON'S CAVE.

BY W. H. D. ROUSE, Litt.D.

It was Sunday morning. In this delightful climate it is easy to do nothing on any day of the week ; but Sunday in chief is felt to be the day when more nothing is done than on other days. Of course no one would dream of lying abed. There are many reasons why one should not lie abed of a Sunday morning in Astypalaea. One reason is, that the sun rises early, and there are no clouds to hide him ; the air is delightfully fresh, all the place is astir with movement and full of sound. Another reason is, that your bed is only the bare boards with a rug stretched over them. Perhaps the most potent reason of all is, that the flies wake up as soon as it is light. By a wise dispensation of providence, or by mutual arrangement, the flies go to sleep when the sun goes down ; then other creatures wake up and take their turn : all through the hours of darkness they revel, until once more the day dawns, and the flies come on duty again. Now I cannot sleep when flies are buzzing round my head, and settling on my face and hands, with their wet kisses. For all these reasons we do not keep our Sunday morning abed in Astypalaea : we get up with the dawn, pour some water on our hands from a tiny mug, wash them and wipe them, dress, and go out for a cup of coffee. With a crust and a cup of coffee, a glass of pure water, a bunch of grapes or some figs, a taste of honey perhaps, we break our fast : it is a meal fit for a prince, which leaves you clear-headed and happy. The bare thought of sausages or bacon is nauseous. Fresh, sweet, wholesome food is this : what more can a man want ?

Breakfast done, the next duty is to pay a visit to the centre of municipal life, and have a chat with our friends. By and by we must go down to Livadhia and look after our *ἐξοχή*, our little plot of vineyard, or garden, whence we get figs and grapes and honey, melons and olives, or corn it may be : or we must tramp over the hills to the *μάνδρα*, where our goats and sheep do feed : but first our duty is beyond doubt social. Away ! To the Gate we go : that ponderous mass of ironbound oak, which fills the arched gateway of the old stronghold : which even within the memory of men still young used to be closed and barred each night, although there is

no one in the island who would do any mischief if it stood open. Within this vaulted gateway the ancient janitor's lodge is now become a place for the sale of coffee and other beverages : thither resort the men of a Sunday morning, to smoke and to talk and to do such business as fits the day.

'Good morning, gentlemen,' I say on entering, and a chorus of greetings comes in reply. The company willingly give place, and find me a chair at one of the little tables. The *cafezís* greets me cordially : my next neighbour asks what I will drink. 'Have you a good *mastícha* here?' 'Excellent!' 'Very well : *mastícha* be it.' A tiny glass half-full of the white spirit is set before me, with a glass of water and a piece of *loukoumi*, or Turkish delight. I bow to my neighbour, who so hospitably has become my entertainer : 'Your health, Sir!' 'Health!' Down goes the dram. Now I call for a cup of black coffee on my part, ordering the same for my neighbour if he is free to take it ; and we light our cigarettes and look round. The room is full. On the long seats which line the walls sit the men in crowds, drest in their Sunday best : blue sleeveless jacket over a white shirt, blue baggy breeches like skirts, gathered in at the knee ; black or white stockings ; low shoes ; a new fez with a long black tassel, not worn upright as the Turks use, but pressed flat over the head to hang down behind. All are smoking cigarettes or *chibouks*, all are laughing, gesticulating, each with his dram or his cup before him ; but with all this merry talk there is to-day a feeling of suppressed expectation about them, which I do not yet understand. This must be something more than the usual Sunday gathering : we shall see.

At this point I notice two persons seated in the middle of the room, with paper before them on a table, making entries with an air of some importance. 'Who are these?' I ask. 'The Mayor and the Clerk, Sir.' 'Ah! you have a Mayor then, and manage your own affairs?' 'Oh yes, we have a board of Commissioners (*ἐπίτροποι τοῦ δήμου*), and a Mayor (*δήμαρχος*), a Clerk (*γραμματεὺς*), elected for a year.' 'Have you all a vote?' 'Anyone who pays fifty *grosia* (*piastres*) in taxes has a vote ; and if he pays a hundred, he is eligible for Mayor.' 'Are they paid any salary?' 'None but the Clerk and the Crier (*διαλαλὸς*) ; the rest serve for honour and glory. The Crier gets ten pounds a year.' 'And what does he do?'

At this moment there was a stir at the door : enters a grizzled little man drest like a seaman, with a tam-o'-shanter cap, who

without warning cries out—'Six thousand the Dragon's Cave! six thousand the Dragon's Cave! Any other bid for the Dragon's Cave! Six thousand once, six thousand twice!' I thought I had gone back a thousand years, to Haroun al-Raschid and the *Arabian Nights*. The buzz of talk, which had ceased for a minute while the Dhialalós made his announcement, now redoubled: bids were made with much show of indifference, the bidder puffing away at his chibouk more vigorously than ever. By and by the Crier went out. 'Where has he gone now?' I asked. 'Oh, to the Agora and the other coffee-shops.' The Agora is a paved and vaulted space just beyond the great gate, within the castle, full of women and children as a rule, now also invaded by a few men who lounge at their doorways to hear the news. 'And what is the Dragon's Cave?' 'Well, Sir, the land of this island mostly belongs to the Church, and it is let out on five years' lease to the highest bidder. The Dragon's Cave is μέσα—Within—and we use the name of Dragon's Cave (*Δρακοντόσπηλιο*) of a tract of land on the extreme east.' This island is shaped like two outspread wings of a butterfly, the two wings being separated by a narrow isthmus about two hundred yards across, and almost at the sea-level. The western side of the island is called Without (*ἔξω*), the eastern side Within (*μέσα*). These titles must be more ancient than the foundation of the fortified village, which is the only village in the island; for the name Without is applied to that part of the island where the village stands, whereas in other islands one is said to 'go in' from the country into the chief town. 'Is it good land by the Dragon's Cave?' I asked; for I felt tempted to become the owner of the romantic spot: it is not often one can buy even the lease of a Dragon's Cave for fifty pounds. 'Stones, stones! but they keep goats there, you see, and there is a little land down by the shore which can be cultivated.'

I would fain have heard more of the Dragon's Cave, but at this moment there was again some commotion at the door, and making a secret resolution to pay a visit 'Within,' I looked to see what was afoot. 'A good hour, my children!' said a rich voice. 'Welcome, most Holy!' they all replied, rising and baring their heads: and in came the burly form of the Bishop, clad in purple silk cassock under his black robe, fat and flourishing; behind him a company of thin Papádhēs, meekly demure, with long black robes to the feet, black stiff hats, black hair curled up under their hats, and faces almost as black. 'Ah, Mr. Goulielmo, glad to see you to-day:

and where is our friend Yacovos?' 'Ill in bed, Most Holy.' 'Dear me, how is that?' 'I don't know, Sir, but I fear your bounteous feast yesterday may have been too much for him.' 'Ah, is it so? Ha, ha!' A few specially favoured kissed the holy hand: his reverence sat down at the middle table, and called for a chibouk. Soon the chibouk was brought, the attendant drawing hard at it as he carried it to make the tobacco burn; the water-vessel was set by his chair, the long tail curled comfortably out of the way, the amber mouthpiece was set between his lips, and the Most Holy bubbled away with much satisfaction, blowing out clouds of smoke.

And now the Crier had returned: all were agog, the Mayor pricked up his ears, the Clerk dipt his pen in the ink, the Dhespótis—the Bishop—looked up expectantly. 'Six thousand nine hundred! Seven thousand for the Dragon's Cave! Seven thousand alla una! Seven thousand alle due! Seven thousand alle tre!' Thump! the lot is knocked down to Georgis. Immediately the cafezís produces a bottle of mastícha and three glasses, with which he goes round the room, pouring a dram for each visitor, who bows to the winner and says—'Kaloríziko, Giorgi! Good luck!' and tosses it off. The Crier tears down from the wall a paper, the kanonismós, on which is written the description of the property, the Clerk signs it, and it is handed over to Giorgis; if before the next Sunday no one has offered an advance of three per cent., Georgis remains the Kapetánios of that Mandhra. Then they proceeded to the next sale: but what care I for the next sale? There is only one Dragon's Cave, and to the Dragon's Cave I mean to go.

Accordingly I make my arrangements to set out next day. To go there on foot is a long and weary march: the best plan is to take shipping. One or two of those persons who have property in that region keep a boat in a little bay on the north side of the island; I made my bargain with one of them, when he turned up for his evening's talk in the coffee-house, and next day at dawn I am up and away. An hour's walk over the hills brings us to the little creek of Marmári with Yánnis, a fine upstanding young fellow of four or five and twenty. The sun rose as we crossed the hill, blood-red, large and flat like the moon on the horizon. There was another passenger, a charcoal-burner with a canvas sack; he threw down the sack with a bang, and out ran a swarm of little cockroaches, which scuttled over the seats and then hid in every cranny and crack. A gentle breeze wafted us over, and I dozed pleasantly.

By and by I awoke to see that we were entering the harbour of Vathy. The entrance is long and narrow, opening into a wide expanse of deep water where many ships might ride safely. The harbour opens out at right angles either way to the entry-strait : on one of the corners stands the ruin of a Hellenic guardhouse, and on the other sat an old, old man, looking like another Hellenic ruin—so immovable he sat on the stone, as if he had grown there, and blinked at us without any look of surprise. He wore indescribable rags, and on his head was a *προβιδένιο καπέλλο*, a cap like Robinson Crusoe's made of goatskin, dried to a shape on a mould, with the hair inside and the skin outside. On his knee was an old leather sack, or *βούγγια*. 'Shall we take the old man in,' said Yánnis, 'to guide you? He knows all the neighbourhood.' By all means : we took in the old man, wallet and all, and disembarked towards the northern end of the bay.

There are a few cultivated fields by the seashore, and a dozen fig-trees, one or two huts, and the inevitable chapel with its white-washed dome. Wherever any trace is to be seen of ancient habitations, there is a chapel, even when there may be no modern worshippers within sight ; here by Vathy are two, one opposite the Hellenic fort, and one by the fields, and on the hills are many more. 'Do you want to go to the Hellenikó?' asked my old man. This is the name they give in Astypalaea to any ancient site. 'Yes, but first I want a drink of water.' We made our way to a well, where a man was trying like the Danaids to draw water with a pail which had large holes in the bottom : when he brought it up, there was a race between the drinker and the holes. After watching my efforts for some moments, the man said, 'Come and have some figs ; we have good figs yonder, and I'll fetch you some more water.' And so we did. On the other side of the field were a few fig-trees, making a pleasant shade, under which were my host's wife and a couple of small children : all were very toilworn and poor, but not discontented. They made a seat for me by the simple process of pulling down the top of the wall, and then the man went off with a whole pail for water, whilst his wife pulled some figs.

My old man sat by my side for a few minutes in silence, then turning to me said with a thoughtful air, 'How strange it is ! I have a tongue and so have you, yet we sit here and say nothing.' 'Good : let us talk, old man. How old are you?' 'Eh, more than eighty ; I don't know how much, but over eighty I am.' 'Do you know any old stories? About '21 [The Greek War of

Independence], or any old stories ?' 'Ah, I knew many in my youth : but I have forgotten them all.' 'Nothing about pirates ?' 'Yes, I used to know stories about pirates, but that was long ago. There were wicked men in the world then, now people are good, now there is law, there is peace.' 'And what do you live on ?' 'I get wood for the charcoal-burners.' 'Wood ! there isn't a tree anywhere that I can see, except these fig-trees.' 'When I was young, all these hills were covered with trees, but they are all gone now, and we dig up the roots of the old trees where we can find them.' By this time the goodwife had gathered a large basket of figs, which she turned out at my feet on a piece of sacking. 'At your service, Kyrie, pray eat some of these, they are fresh figs, nice and sweet.' 'I thank you kindly.' We both ate all we would, and drank from our goodman's pail ; and then took leave of our kind friends, who insisted on my taking away as many figs as I could well carry.

As we walked up the hillside, the heat began to be felt. There was not a breath of air : a strange thing in this island, which is generally swept by the four winds of heaven, never hot, and often quite cool. The old man trudged on slowly in front of me, and I understood that the stride of a man of eighty-odd years was well suited to me. 'Do you know the Dragon's Cave ?' I asked him. 'Yes.' 'Where is it ?' 'Over there.' 'Is it near the Hellenikó ?' 'Not far off.' 'Look, let us go there first.' 'What for ? there is nothing there, only a cave.' 'Never mind, I want to see it.' He said no more, but set out again at a snail's pace : I had a good view of his dress from behind, and I was just wondering how it all held together when I noticed that it did not. One of his shoes began to show signs of disintegration ; the sole evidently meant to stay behind, not fancying this unaccustomed journey : it is the pace that kills. For awhile the old man took no notice ; at length he could ignore it no longer, and he regarded the shoe without anger, but with determination. We were now on a path half-way up the hill, which followed the windings of the shore ; the sea, calm and shining, lay a hundred freet below, and the sun's rays reflected from the hill kept us warmed on both sides. He sat down. 'Here's a knife for you, Géro [old man],' said I. He looked at the knife, but said nothing. Very deliberately he unslung his wallet, opened it, and fumbled amongst the odds and ends which filled it. Well ! I thought, this is an oddity ; why won't he take my knife ? Such a thing was far from his mind, as I soon saw : what, cut off

the sole of your shoe ! what waste ! where should he get another ? I was in no hurry, glad of a rest indeed after the breakneck race up the hill : I watched him with interest. First he produced an awl ; then an old knife ; lastly a strip of scraped goatskin. With trembling fingers, he sliced off a long piece of the goatskin, as thin as he could cut it : this done, he removed the boot, and painfully bored several holes through the sole and the upper with the awl ; then threaded the strip of goatskin through each hole, and cobbled his boot together again. All this was done with much difficulty, his hand trembling with weakness and age. The mending of the shoe took half an hour ; but it was a magnificent success, and after deliberately packing up his wallet again, the old man rose. Not one word had he said the whole time.

When we resumed our march, the heat had become very oppressive. The path had come to an end by this time, and we picked our way painfully over weather-worn rocks, which beat back the heat on my face as though they were the shell of some great boiler. Still not a breath of air : blazing sun, burning rocks, hot air flickering upwards like the flame of a candle. The old man stood still : he turned slowly, and looked at me : there was a world of wonder in his eye. 'κόπος, κόπος !' he said, 'hard work !' 'Where's the Cave ?' said I. 'Down yonder.' Then he added, 'What do you want to go there for ? It's just a cave.' 'Oh, never mind, I want to go.' 'Well, I can't see any sense in it. There's no profit to be made there !' 'Come along, Géro ; there is profit for you, if not for me ! I'm going there anyhow.' So we crawled that last half-mile to the Dragon's Cave, and at its mouth I dropt exhausted on a stone. A few goats came leaping up from the depths, looked sharply at us, and scampered away : there was a whirring of wings, as the wild pigeons which haunt it flitted from perch to perch in the roof. The mouth is about thirty feet above sea-level : the entry is steep, and runs down to that level or below it. The floor is black, soft, springy : each step as we descend raises a cloud of snuff-like dust, the droppings of countless goats through hundreds of years, dried and worn to powder, quite covering the rocks beneath. Within, the vault rises high out of sight : great stalactites fall from roof to floor ; at the bottom there is a deep and wide pool of water. A little to the left, a break in the rock shows another cave far below, darker and deeper, also with a deep pool of water in it and tall stalactite columns. I know this kind of cave well : they are found in many another island. Ithaca has one, Crete has many.

And here as I look, I see traces of human handiwork. One of the great stalactites, by the right wall, has been cut away, so as to leave its base in the form of a half-round table or altar ; beside it, and higher up, a smaller stalactite has been cut into a bracket. Here, we cannot doubt, the prehistoric peoples held their worship of the great unknown, and left their offerings, as they did in the cave on Mount Ida in Crete, and the cave on Mount Dicte. There is no trace of medieval use in this cave : no refugees made it their home in the War of Independence, which like most of the movements of the world's life, left this island almost untouched. The Dragon's Cave ! it begins to be clear where that name has come from.

The cave lies at the extreme north-west of the island ; and I determined not to return as we came, but to climb up over the hill and pass by what is called τὰ πάνω Ἑλληνικά, the upper ruins. I need not linger over the climb : the sun on my back, the rocks scorching my feet through the shoe-leather, not a tree, not a shade, not a puff of wind—never have I felt so hot. We crawled upwards : 'Courage, my pallikári [brave lad],' I called out, and the old man, for the first time, laughed aloud : it must have been half a century since anyone called him by that name. Once on the top, we looked down upon a rolling landscape of bare rocks, with the sea beyond the first dip to the left. On the tableland between us and the sea lay the ruins of a Greek settlement, a fortress or watch-tower and the foundations of buildings. We followed the top of the hill, passing an old church now used as a goat-fold and store for chaff and straw, the walls black with smoke, goats basking upon its whitewashed roof ; by and by I beheld a heavenly sight below me—the waters of Vathy bay, the green shade of trees, wells of water ! In all our long walk we had not seen one drop of fresh water, and this put life into my limbs. In a short time I was down by the well. There under a large fig-tree sat a company of stalwart young men, taking their midday meal. A sack was spread on the ground before them, and upon it lay a large mess of olives in paper, horns of hard black bread, and a goatskin of cheese : they were eating heartily of this food. A tin pail of water stood beside them, from which they drank. At that hour there was only one thing precious in the world—water : and water refreshed the parched traveller, after his adventures.

One said, 'The sun has burnt you.' 'No,' I said, 'I have been to the Dragon's Cave, and the dragon blew fire at me and burnt

me.' They laughed at this, and another man replied, 'They do say that in ancient times there was a Wild Man in that cave, and he had a brother, another Wild Man, who lived in another cave, in the island of Amorgos, which you see yonder; and one would come out of his cave, and shout across the sea, "Vré! I'm ready, my boy!" Then they used to go out, and catch men, and pulled them into the cave, to eat them. After that there was a great serpent, there used to be winged snakes in those days; but St. Christodoulos came over from Patmos, and killed him, and exorcised him and all his family. Since then, there have been no snakes here; and if you bring one, and let it loose, it dies.'

There is the story of the Dragon's Cave.

It is easy to believe that scenes like the sale of the Dragon's Cave have taken place ever since the castle was built in 1413, when the inhabitants returned from Italy, their refuge from the raids of eastern hordes of savages. It is not difficult to believe that there were other such as long as the Church held lands in the island; nor indeed before that, when the Greek gods possessed the same lands. Indeed, my thoughts go back to another island, Delos, where such a scene certainly did take place in the year 250 B.C., for we have a record of it. Apollo was the landowner in this case, and the Most Holy the Bishop was then represented by the Hieropoios, or Maker of Holy Sacrifice to the god. Each year he administered the temple funds, and entered in a day-book receipts and disbursements, in which many amazing details are found. There are tithes of corn and fish, rents, offertory plates and collection-boxes; he sold the hide or fleece of the animal sacrificed, and an occasional fox-goose or peacock, even the pigeons' droppings. He paid all current expenses, including 8 drachms to the dressers who drest Hera, one drachm for catching a goat, and one to the boy who hunted the crows: he paid for gilding the fish, and on one occasion, he paid those who 'lifted out of the hippodrome the attendant-woman of the Carystians' House,' but he does not say how she came there. He pays wages, and we note that the flute-girls got 120 drachms, but the secretary only 80. He also makes loans, for Apollo was a great money-lender. But each year, there was an auction of the estates, and for a moment we seem to be in Golders' Green: for every plot has a title, the Laurels and the Oaks, the Pottery, the Shrubbery, and the Towers, and we find that these are fancy titles, since every item is set down. Thus the tenant of the Date-Palms took over one outhouse with door, one cell without

door, a cowstall and a sheepfold without doors, an upper storey with door and a kitchen without, vines 596, figs 40, wild figs 5, but no date-palms at all. He paid 650½ drachms for his lease; and can we not imagine the sale in one of the temple buildings, with the Holy Priest in a purple robe? And can we imagine such a scene without talk and jest, and the wine-cup going round, with 'good luck to Antigonas,' in the same ancient language as wished good luck to Giorgis? Nor would the men's faces look strange, nor the dress of the peasant or fisherman, nor the lively movement of hands, and arms, and face.

The Holy Priest of 250 B.C. sums up his budget with a perfect balance which would have satisfied Mr. Micawber,

'Sum of revenue, 79,405 dr.

Sum of expenditure, 79,405 dr.'

But the mean Arabic numerals do no justice to his pride. In the record, the row of noble symbols is like an army with banners—

Receipts $\text{M M M X X X X H H H H P}$

Expenditure $\text{M M M X X X X H H H H P}$

'POLICING' THE ELEPHANT-HERDS.

BY MOSTYN POLE.

It was a lovely night, suffused with star-glow and full of cries and calls, and stealthy sounds. The Senior Commissioner and I sat on the verandah after an excellent dinner. Now we had first-rate smokes and sat complacent, while his well-taught Wanderobo boys mixed fizzly drinks of the best.

Yet he was not happy, that forceful, efficient man. I told him of laments in the home Press about the lawless doings of amateur killers of big game in this 'easy' day. Our talk ran to rich Americans and others who brought netted and armoured cars into my S.C.'s loose enormous zoo. Of those aeroplanes which had been tried and come to grief—to the joy of all except their scared and jolted occupants. And then we spoke of still newer tribes: bloodless writers of photo-books, and the movie fans who worked up all sorts of screen-stunts, with the black men and wild beasts in larky or lurid rôles.

Even the crocodiles of Lake Albert were become a potting pastime for passengers on the river steamers. As for the hippos of Lakes Kivu and Edward—were not these now used as targets to try out the explosive toys of exuberant tourists who simply *must* take back a few heads and skins?

'I know,' my host murmured after a tremendous gulp. 'That's why we knocked hippos off our "vermin list."' He seemed bored with the subject.

'Before I left London,' I went on unwarily, 'I attended a meeting of the Society for the Preservation of the Empire's Fauna. A lord took the chair, and——'

I got no further; for that word 'fauna' stung my Commissioner into torrents of speech.

'Now see here,' he began as he banged down his glass. 'If Africa is to progress at all, the big game must *go*! We officials are torn between the deep seas of sentiment at home and all sorts of devils out here—white and black, as well as horns, fangs and tusks. . . . Damn the "Fauna"! We're fed up with it. Look at our elephants. Why, man, we've got *twenty thousand* of 'em right here in this Protect'rate. What are we goin' to do with 'em? . . .

Tell me ! ' the S.C. insisted with great heat, while I dug within me for a reply.

' They've realms of their own,' I opined. ' Sanctuaries——'

' But suppose they break out—as they do ? What if they won't stay "sanct." ? What if a mob of 'em—hundreds strong, feel they need a change of air and diet ? Of if they swoop down on our plantations and native *shambas*, to eat up a country and leave nothing behind but havoc and ruin—and famine relief for the tribesmen ? Or if they raid European farms in quest of coffee and maize, trampling the water-furrows flat, unroofing barns and wrecking homes as though a million steam-rollers had run amok in our cultivated areas ?

' Go and talk to Colonel Smith or the Hon. Bobby Jones, who's put his all into our tropic acres. See what *he'll* say about the Empire's Fauna, as he surveys the wake of that tornado of five-ton hoofs. It won't be elephants he'll want to shoot. He'll want to make holes in *you* !'

Here came a long and vengeful drink, as though to justify the homicide of a preachy ignoramus.

' Three nights ago,' the Commissioner went on more softly, after he'd filled up mine and clapped his hands for more—' my boys raised the usual yell of " Elephants ! " I hopped up from the table and ran out—to see three or four monsters munching my sweet corn-cobs ! Twenty-foot high, at least, they looked in the half-light. Swayin' like ballet-girls, they were, swingin' defiance at me with trunks an' tusks an' tails. I let 'em lift all they wanted, for fear they'd lift the house and drop it on the lot of us ! And mind you, *they* were only scouts of the herd, spyin' out a new land. Be sure they went home with grand news. For elephants *do* talk ! They know what roads mean, as well as you do. They've more sense than any black men or most o' the whites. They have their own schools, their own parliaments and laws, and their own officials and doctors. Yes—and executioners too, for quick euthanasia in sick cases beyond a cure. Ask my Rangers ; they've seen that very act debated, and carried out with a few deadly drives of six-foot teeth.'

' What a book those lads could write ! ' I put in, when I could.

' And brand themselves as liars, eh ? They've better sense than that. Our Wardens *do* lead weird lives, though. They dwell alone with the elephants, mapping the big herds, watching and tracking them—so as to forestall stampedes and head off a mob, with timely

warning to white and black folks of a coming storm. But when all is said, it's a thankless job—and a risky one!

'Round a camp fire at night those jungle sentries will spin the queerest of yarns. But who'd believe 'em in cold print? That new man-eater, f'r instance, the "Ndalawo"—he's half leopard and half hyena. He hunts in small packs, a fiendish hybrid with a peculiar laugh, uttered only in the hot chase. Yes, sir. Our jungles and plains know the oddest of matings. But such tales are not for books; they belong to lore of the raw and wild, and that must die with our wilderness watchers.'

Here the African silence fell again, pointed with discords from far and near; the noises of prowling quest, of wary watch and alarms in a darkling war that can have no truce. . . .

'I often think,' my friend pursued, 'that our Game Wardens write official reports with an eye upon all parties: Humanitarians at home, "Empire Fauna champions"; the coloured folks out here, and lastly our colonist communities who say, "To hell with the blacks and the beasts—it is *WE* who're redeeming this Land."

'The Bunyoro Reserve, I see, has been widened to take in the Victoria Nile between Foweira and Murchison Falls—and even as far as Lake Albert, so as to protect the countless crocodiles from pot-shotters on the river steamers. Could anything be sillier? Has *anybody* a good word for a crocodile? I don't like to see his tears splashed in those Blue-Books from Entebbe, Nairobi and Arusha.

'The hippos take a tremendous toll of crops along the rivers. Buffaloes ruin the nurseries of the Forestry Department, besides being carriers of rinderpest on a serious scale. As for the giraffe, I know he's a special pet of the "Empire's Fauna" people in London. But ask our colonists about that Highbrow as a farm feeder! Over there in the Trans-Nzoia, the giraffe is a first-class problem. I believe Lord Howard de Walden's manager has his eye on the most havocky herd, with a view to ending its invasions. And so the fight rages right down the ranks, from the lions that leave ominous pug-prints on Lady So-and-So's flower-beds and wads of mane-hair on her barbed fences, clear down to hyenas and wild dogs, and the baboon-packs and bush-pigs that we now poison wholesale.

'I tell you, farming in these parts is a heart-breaking task. But this matter of our elephants overshadows all. They're uneasy and capricious nowadays. I fancy the Great War—which was *here*,

remember, as well as over *there*—unsettled all East Africa's beasts, and changed their ways of life. Shell-fire routed the herds out of waste places where they did no harm, and gave them a taste for roaming. Then on their travels they tumbled on food that wasn't theirs at all!

'The lions ate men—even the wounded, I fear! Elephants, buffaloes and zebras left the sown acres bare, and all sorts of antelopes, from big eland and kudu to the tiny dik-dik, had the time of their lives. And to this day—the day of Africa's progress—those bad habits persist. What are we going to do about it? Shall our planters look for relief to members of the Society for the Preservation of the Empire's Fauna? Those ladies and gents met in Regent's Park, you say, where the big beasts are nicely caged and fed on buns, as curious exhibits in Geography. But here we have 'em loose in millions. And when they feed, it's our tropic labours they devour.

'Quite literally they can—and do!—eat us out of house and home. You should see a farm on the morrow of an elephant-ravage. From first to last its owner possibly put five or six thousand pounds into the place. And what's left, after those voracious trampers have passed on? Even the buildings are scattered to bits, fences walked through as you'd wave a hand through water. Irrigation systems have vanished, scarce leaving a trace.

'It's a sight of frenzy and despair. Staring out on the ruin of his hopes and efforts, can you see *that* Adam of our Eden sending a sub. to Lord Onslow and Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell, as a zealot for the survival of the "Empire's Fauna"? You *can't* have it both ways. Either keep your wild beasts and let Africa rip—or else wipe out wild beasts and let industry and agriculture spread far and wide on the new map.

'Here, I maintain, is an economic point of acute pressure, one which the home Press ignores, while endeavouring to hold a specious balance between two mutually destructive interests.'

Long and late did the Commissioner and I discuss the huge elephant-hordes that now drift in spasmodic whims between the Desert and the Sown in the semi-settled Africas, and are to-day become a politico-social question which cannot be shelved much longer. The world's demand for ivory, as for all luxuries, shows a notable falling off. So cheap is silver that the brushware trades use it for backing and mounting instead of the costlier and more uncertain commodity. As for piano-keys, here the decrease is extraordinary. Radio-music, gramophones and mechanised 'play-

ers' have reduced the output of pianos that one plays oneself by more than half. Where 100,000 instruments of all grades were once sold in this country, the sales for 1931 were barely 47,000.

People now prefer to buy a motor-car and join the endless queues that block our city streets or race along the country roads. Even billiard-balls are now turned accurately from the Colombian tagua-palm and other substitutes. It is the same story in the cutlery, umbrella and fancy trades. Formerly these took masses of the poorer tusks which are laid out on the famous 'Ivory Floor' of the London docks. Including Liverpool, Antwerp and Hamburg, well over a thousand tons of ivory was disposed of annually. And for teeth of the finest grain—the so-called 'scrivelloes' from which billiard-balls were cut—as much as £160 a hundredweight was paid.

In that hey-day of ivory the Zanzibar market was a lively scene. Professional hunters and poachers hurried in with big trophies of a recent kill. Black tribesmen from all over East Africa brought in 'dead' stuff, either from elephant 'graveyards,' or from village hoards which had been amassed by born trackers, like the Kambas of Kenya and the Kavirondo, Masai and Wanderobo peoples.

These men would trail a big herd for days, southward through dense scrub along the Sabaki River, or up north to the great Lorian Swamp. And there, although carrying no arms of precision but only big knives and spears, these savages would pull down twelve or fifteen great bulls in a single drive. White shikaris like Frederick Selous had little or no restrictions placed on their rifles. They slew hundreds of elephants, and could pick and choose their ivory from the mighty mobs. The London taxidermist, Rowland Ward, of Piccadilly, displayed two awesome tusks that were eleven feet long. And was not one of King George's wedding gifts a fine-grain specimen weighing 193 lb.?

To-day the ivory-trades are in the doldrums. The fancy goods of Rouen—chess-men, crucifixes, prayer-book covers and the like—are now cut from vegetable ivories of many sorts. Even the women of India and the Far East no longer call for armlets made from 'pieces' dropped from the once-busy lathes of true ivory-trades. The hoarding of gold and silver in recent years has much to do with this.

So the elephant-hunter is not so keen as he was in trailing the herds to get meat for his native guides and porters, and ivory for the 'floors' of London, Liverpool, Antwerp and Hamburg. As a result of this immunity, these mighty beasts, far from facing extinction,

are positively increasing. Moreover, in response to humanitarian clamour, the various governments of Africa have long put a damper upon amateur shots, as well as rounding up poachers, both black and white.

In Kenya to-day a 'Visitor's Full' licence costs no less than £100. Under this permit, his first elephant will cost the tourist £50, and a second one a further £100. As for illegal traffic in ivory, the Red Sea ports are now well watched for egress of 'the stuff.' Little-known inland areas are also policed, and the Game Laws enforced even against the native trackers of remote tribes. One white officer recovered for his government over a hundred tusks, and secured seventy-five convictions for unlawful killing of elephants and other great game by the various Wanyika peoples.

I found the same prohibitions across the Kenya Border in Tanganyika. But even this huge domain—over seven times the size of England—is becoming colonised, and its settlers make the same complaints of wild-beast depredations. Our home Press will now and then speak of the Serengeti Plain as though it were a smallish preserve. Yet, in fact, this thinly populated tract is as large as Scotland. Here, likewise, the laws have been tightened up during the past ten years, and the following extract from them throws a curious light upon the pranks indulged in by tourists, both British and foreign, in these days of rapid transit and the craving for new sensations:

'No person shall pursue game in a motor-car, or use for hunting game any aeroplane or airship, or any missile containing an explosive, or use any light for the purpose of dazzling game. Shooting is also forbidden from a train or boat, either travelling or stationary. So also is the use of nets, guns, snares, poison or poisoned weapons, on pain of imprisonment and/or fine, and revocation of the licence.'

Now, effectively to administer these regulations is a costly and difficult business in semi-savage lands which are being slowly, but surely, developed and cultivated. This is most strikingly seen in the curious African kingdom of Uganda, whose vague frontiers fade away into the Sudan and Kenya Colony, Tanganyika and the Belgian Congo. Here the most urgent matter is not so much the maintenance of a big head of game, as the keeping of it within safe limits and in safe places. For Uganda now has well over three million people of all sorts, from its four Christian 'kings' to fussy little pygmies of the Semliki River.

Cotton is extensively grown, as also is coffee, cocoa and Pará

rubber. So the wild elephants—which swarm in their thousands!—are an endless source of trouble to officials, alike in the black, or 'Royal,' capital of Mengo and the white city of Entebbe, where the Governor dwells. 'Everything' in big game is here—even the rare white rhinoceros; but it is control of the huge elephant-mobs that engrosses Uganda's wilderness police.

The herds are numbered and watched. They know where they are safe; but like mankind they are venturesome, and love to vary a humdrum existence with unusual thrills. Tame and wild in turns; of incredible cunning and sudden caprice, these mighty 'clans' present Africa's clash of interests in its acutest form. They will go off raiding at times, and by way of reprisal the Chief Game Warden metes out 'punishment,' well knowing how the marvellous sagacity of these brutes can couple cause and effect, and draw their own conclusions.

At the first blast of counter-attack on the enormous herd known as 'Bunyoro No. 1' (in the Northern Province), the stampede is a terrifying sight. Screaming and trumpeting, with sinuous trunks upraised and tails in vengeful twist, these monsters crash through the giant spear-grass and scrub in nightmarish flight. Many fugitive platoons will vanish into the *enclave* of Herd No. 3—where they are viewed as aliens and interlopers, to be evicted or even fought to the death. But the main mob make for their own sanctuary, which is along the bad lands of the Kafu River, as far as Masindi Port. Here the giant veterans of a routed army order a stand. And woe unto their human pursuers if these are rash enough to press the persecution any farther!

In a word, cotton-growing Uganda's problem to-day is not that of elephant 'protection,' but of elephant 'control.' Massed colonies of these uncertain beasts have learned many lessons in the past five years. But however amenable to reason and discipline the herds may be, it is clear they are undesirable citizens of a busy Protectorate which is twice the size of England. Uganda's Chief Warden himself admits that their presence in the planted and settled areas of Toro 'calls for more drastic action than mere scaring away. In many cases a thinning out is essential; in others, these wild elephants must either be moved—or exterminated.' Here speaks a witness of incomparable authority, using the dread word which is on every white planter's lips, though it may appal defenders of the 'Empire's Fauna' here at home, whose only acquaintance with a ten-foot tusker is in the placid gardens of Regent's Park.

One is amused and amazed in the domain of His Highness the Kabaka of Baganda, to find elephants dwelling side by side with H.H.'s afflicted lieges. These blacks pay enforced tithes and taxes to sinister 'gangsters' who take liberal toll of the crops at their own will and caprice. As a rule, the elephants here haunt the rivers, and feed and frolic from swamp to swamp. But they grow weary of sameness: they descend upon the Sown—mainly Uganda's cotton which is already worth over £2,300,000 a year.

Very regretfully, then, does white Authority in Entebbe contemplate the end of these adventurous visitors: 'It would appear that the fate of most of these herds will be extermination.' The only alternative—the Game Warden thinks—is to coax the huge beasts up north into wilder lands, where the Bunyoro elephants already prowl in their trampling thousands.

Such is agricultural Africa's curious dilemma at the present time. It is well to remember that even in India the annual mortality among human beings from wild beasts is about 3,000, to say nothing of 20,000 to 25,000 more who meet a fearsome death from snake-bite. Of these casualties, of course, very few are Europeans—though sportsmen are sometimes mauled and killed by tigers and panthers.

The corresponding figures for all Africa can never be known, or even estimated. Certainly lions grow more and more bold as civilisation spreads. In Dar-es-Salaam an officer of the Tanganyika Service reported a case *à propos*. One night a lioness leaped into a stockaded village, quite near to his camp, and grabbed a man under the eyes of a screeching crowd. The brute was in no hurry. Trotting slowly into the bush for a few yards, she put down her victim, to kill and devour him whilst blinking at the very fires which the people had kept kindled to keep off dangerous or marauding beasts.

Such are the facts as I found them in the 'newer' Africas. These lands now fairly ferment with political and industrial ideas. Their spokesmen set new aims and purpose before the Imperial Government, and that in no uncertain way. One had but to listen to delegates of the recent East African Conference in Nairobi, rehearsing the points they would put to the Colonial Office. Clearly, new dominions are in the making over there. And those pioneers display a sturdy 'Sinn Feinism' of their own, born of battling with the wild, unaided and alone.

They consider themselves as the dominating factor. A policy

is urged that will attract suitable settlers to the richest lands. One hears little from these colonists about the black folks' rights—and a great deal on the subject of wild beasts. With the 'dangerous' types they can easily deal. It is the crop and farm marauders that these African delegates curse. If they had *their* way, there would be drastic changes in the protection of big game—especially those roaming elephants whose 'steam-rolling' raids I have described. Do but mention 'humanitarians' to these bold Empire-builders: tell them of a London *séance* of shrill protest over the slaying of that 'Fauna'—and one draws a cynical or angry barrage, in which are embedded scraps of a Nature-book, that would shock and stagger the soft sentimentalists in arm-chairs at home!

THE UNKNOWN PROPHET.

BY FULANAIN.

I.

NEVER had the river looked more sparkling, the crowded punts gayer, the trees and green lawns more invitingly cool. At Phyllis Court, luncheon was nearly over; but a party at the end of the long pavilion still lingered, in no hurry to return to the blazing sunshine of the deck-chairs along Cromwell's wall. In the tightly wedged mass of boats below, picnic-baskets were being repacked, sunshades reopened. Trinity and Pembroke paddled gently down the narrow course towards the starting-post. Upstream, Henley Bridge was black with people.

'There is something rather pleasant about a regatta,' murmured Lucy Walker lazily.

Her elderly husband grunted.

'You ought to have seen the Kurna regatta,' he said. 'In Mesopotamia, during the war. Goodness knows why the man in charge of that wretched district wanted a regatta, but he got one up. I remember a race between two crews of Arab women, all swathed up in their dirty black clothes, and about ten to a dug-out canoe. They all fell in, what's more.'

'I saw that race, sir,' exclaimed the man opposite. 'I was in the paddle-steamer that put off a boat to the rescue.'

Lady Walker was intrigued.

'Did they really all fall in?' she asked.

'Well, the race was between the ten wives of the local shaikh and a scratch crew of ten other women. It was arranged that the shaikh's harem should win, but in the excitement of the race the other crew so far forgot its orders as to come in first. Whereupon the shaikhly ladies, enraged at this display of bad faith and *lèse-majesté*, turned as one woman on the other crew, paddles in hand. Result, a free fight, and both boats swamped. All the Arabs roared with laughter, the shaikh loudest of all; the probable drowning of their womenkind seemed to leave them quite indifferent. However, most if not all could swim, and they were all pulled out safely.'

'I'm glad, poor dears,' said Lady Walker. 'But it's a very nice story, Major Kirby.'

'Well, I don't care for all that sort of thing—too much like fraternising with the enemy!' said the General testily. 'At that time the Arabs were just as much our enemies as the Turks, what with murdering the wounded, and robbing and looting and generally making trouble. Those Kurna rascals were the worst of the lot, too: living like fighting cocks on rations stolen from our S. & T. boats, while the Political Officer entertained them with regattas! What was the fellow's name, Kirby? Ransom—Rawson?'

'Rawdon, sir,' said the younger man shortly.

'Ah, yes. I never had much use for him. I remember that when Hall took over the Kurna district, we had no more trouble over robberies.'

Kirby's thin face had flushed a dark red. Lady Walker looked at him curiously.

'I can tell you why not, sir,' he said. He twisted the stem of his liqueur-glass, and stared at it as he spoke. 'Because it was Rawdon's regatta that put an end to the trouble, as he meant it to. He was shot the same night, but the thing was done. As you say, when Hall took over, the Kurna district had learnt its lesson.'

Lucy Walker, a tactful woman and a wary, cut short a threatening silence by proposing a move to the terrace. It was not until some weeks later that she heard from Kirby the whole story of Rawdon and his strange regatta.

II.

Rawdon was in charge, said Kirby, of an enormous district, half desert and half marsh. The marsh gave about three times as much trouble as the desert, because it lay astride our Lines of Communication. At the time the General was talking of, the Arabs who lived in the swamps on either side of the river were having the time of their lives, stealing provisions and kit from our boats as they chugged upstream towards Kut. Rawdon's job was to put a stop to this; and he set about it with his usual mixture of energy and—well, I suppose you might almost call it second sight.

He was an odd sort of fellow; Highland on his mother's side, and so quick in the uptake that he could always see through the intrigues of the local shaikhs. It was uncanny at times, the way he got to the bottom of things; but we soon found that a mere guess of Rawdon's was well worth acting upon. Not that we who worked under him had any choice, for he was not a person to be

argued with, and as obstinate as a mule in carrying out his wildest plans.

'I tell ye I know,' he would say if anyone ventured a doubt; and in some way or other he certainly did know.

All the same, he was very methodical. He put everything on paper—lists of names, plans, plots, and schemes of his own. Day after day he would sit in his stifling little office, eternally typing away on his Corona—for he never wrote a word—and flinging on the floor sheet after sheet which before the next day's work began were miraculously restored to order, docketed, and filed. From this small room he wielded an enormous influence, not only over his own district but across the frontier into Western Persia, where at that time the German secret service agents were exceedingly busy putting spokes in our wheel. Rawdon watched them as a dog watches a cat, and his particular *flair* made him extraordinarily successful in checkmating them.

He used to keep a loose-leaf ledger. On one side were the latest reports received from his own sources on each secret agent, on the other side two headings: 'Probable movements and intentions,' and 'Proposals to frustrate.' Under these Rawdon typed his views; and the frequency with which his prophecies were fulfilled must have had a good deal to do with the Germans' lack of success in Persia—at all events until after the war, when it didn't matter so much.

All the well-known names appeared in this ledger: von Raas, Waussmann, Holdeke. They were all German names, I noticed, but one—Jamil al Atrachchi.

'Who is this fellow?' I asked once.

'A Turk,' replied Rawdon. 'Probably the only Turk in the inner confidence of the German secret service. Educated in Berlin, and thoroughly too. He's the most elusive of the lot, but I shall meet him all right. And then, no flowers by request!'

'What do you mean by that?'

Rawdon hesitated.

'Well,' he said at length, 'call it one of my superstitions if you like; but I am quite sure that if ever I meet Jamil al Atrachchi face to face, my time will have come.'

I hardly thought that he was serious, until he cut short my chaffing enquiries with his usual quiet little phrase, 'I tell ye I know.' Just how serious a matter it was to him, I was to learn some months later.

III.

The affair of the regatta came upon me suddenly, like all Rawdon's schemes. On a sweltering hot afternoon I was awakened by a raucous Klaxon horn, and grabbing my topee was just in time to reach the river as his launch swung round and banked in.

'First a long drink,' said Rawdon, as we walked towards my office. 'Then we'll talk shop.'

Later, his thirst quenched, he pulled out of his pocket a wad of pink telegraph forms.

'Here's what I've come to talk about,' he said, with a grimace.

'I know all about them—I've had copies,' I replied.

The telegrams were all from 'Communications,' informing Rawdon, with monotonous detail, of robberies from the river steamers passing through his district. The last one, which he detached and flipped across the table to me, not only barked but bit. It reminded him that these frequent raids endangered the supply of full rations to the troops ahead, and asked why, as Political Officer, he had not put a stop to them.

'Purblind old fool!' said Rawdon savagely, referring to the General who had thus rebuked him. 'He is afraid that the troops will have to go on short rations: I only wish I were afraid of nothing worse. They'll get no rations at all pretty soon, if we don't look out!'

'What do you mean, sir?' I was fairly shaken up by his tone of desperate anxiety. 'No rations at all would be the end of everything!'

'It would—and it is no imaginary danger, Kirby, I am certain. All this raiding business is by no means haphazard. There is a new element at work—some purpose, some controlling brain behind it all,' he went on. 'Just who or what it is baffles me, and that is what makes me feel unsure of my ground. I have my own idea, all the same and I want your opinion. If I am right, we must take strong measures at once, or God help the troops!'

I can tell you I was flattered at Rawdon's wanting my opinion, as well as excited by the gravity with which he spoke. I can remember practically every word he said as he went over the whole situation, tapping out the points with his long restless fingers, and drawing rapid little sketch-maps in red ink to illustrate them.

'Ours is the weakest link in the L. of C.,' he said, 'here where the river is narrowest. You know how the boats, with their two barges lashed alongside, can barely squeeze between the banks.

It is child's play for the Arabs to jump aboard out of the reeds, seize what they can, and slip back again. Armed guards don't stop them—the game is too well worth the candle. Electric lights along both banks all through the Narrows don't stop them. Only one thing does, and that is personally putting the fear of God into the leaders; and this we have done between us, for every tribe but one. For the last month there have been practically no robberies except by the Albu Aita. The Albu Aita! There's the crux of the whole matter. I have been wondering for a long time just what gave this one tribe a unity, a persistence which makes it different from all the rest; and yesterday I got a clue. They have a prophet.'

'What, a sort of Mad Mullah of their own?' I asked.

'I don't know just what sort, yet,' said Rawdon. 'But they claim to be protected as well as guided. And what worries me is this. If there is really a man with a good brain behind all this, how soon will he go a step further—the obvious, simple step which will hold up our whole offensive: I mean sinking a boat in the Narrows, and stopping the river traffic for goodness knows how long?'

'Good Lord!' said I.

'Well, isn't it obvious, and simple?' asked Rawdon impatiently. 'All these whines from Headquarters about petty pilfering make me sick. The Albu Aita's looting is organised and deliberate, as I see it. And if I am right there is nothing for it but to get in first—wipe out the whole tribe if necessary. Think it over, Kirby. I should like very much to know whether you agree with me or not.' And he began slowly to fill his pipe.

I began to realise, as I sat thinking over Rawdon's words, that I had fallen into the common error of despising the enemy. The Arabs of the marshes were a savage, ignorant crowd, but none the less they were good fighting material for any leader who had intelligence enough to make them obey him. I was amazed, now that Rawdon had outlined the idea, that the obvious danger of the Narrows being blocked had never entered my mind. And something else flashed into my memory.

'I can confirm,' I said, 'what you suspect about a prophet. I heard of him as able to raise the dead. A certain Salih bin Mabrouk is said to have been brought to life by him.'

'Raise the dead, can he?' said Rawdon thoughtfully. 'That

might account for the Albu Aita's lack of fear when raiding. Well, what are we to do about it, Kirby ?'

'Strike at 'em, quick and hard,' I said. 'Attack them, burn their village, and catch their prophet if we can.'

'You agree with me, then,'—I thought Rawdon spoke reluctantly. 'That is certainly the logical thing to do ; nothing else for it, as far as I can see.'

'Don't you like the look of it, sir ?' I hazarded.

'Oh . . . well . . . ' said Rawdon, and drawing a map towards him would say no more.

In the long silence that followed, while Rawdon pored over the map, my mind was busy with plans. To punish a village which is hidden deep in the marshes is no easy matter, as I had reason to know. We thought ourselves lucky, on earlier attempts, if we could only reach and burn the reed huts from which their owners had fled unscathed with all their goods. My force of gendarmerie was rapidly becoming a good striking force, but it could not move about the marshes without boats, and here was our chief difficulty. However secretly we assembled enough of the local canoes for a massed attack, the news was sure to leak out, and we should find the birds flown.

'Yes,' Rawdon broke in, as if he had been following my train of thought. 'Transport is the difficulty. I've had enough of carefully planned, would-be secret concentrating of canoes. Let's try a new scheme this time. We'll collect them openly, under the very noses of the tribes. We'll hold a regatta !'

IV.

The regatta duly came off ; not so very different, either, from those known to the Thames, though along the river-banks date-palms took the place of shady willows. The P.O.'s slim white launch carried the umpires—Shaikh Musa, and Rawdon himself, who gave his whole attention to the racing ; for he was one of those who, having made his subordinate responsible for carrying out a plan, did not interfere with suggestions or advice.

We had a Grand Stand, and adjoining it a Ladies' Stand, fronted by a reed lattice through which the more exalted of the townspeople's womenfolk might see without being seen. Outside the refreshment tent, fires were being lighted under twenty huge black cauldrons, for the cooking of several hundredweight of rice ; and fifty sheep were having their throats cut. For it was Rawdon's

idea to end up the regatta by a great free feast, which would not only attract neighbouring marshmen (with their canoes), but would induce a general somnolence when the time came for us to take action.

The races were many and various : poling and paddling, swimming and inter-tribal races, and the women's race that you know about. More than one ludicrous contretemps occurred, but everyone seemed to be thoroughly enjoying the show. Except myself, that is ; for on me lay heavy the responsibility of embarking three hundred of my gendarmerie, in eighty of the canoes which had been run up to the river-bank a few hundred yards downstream.

The feast achieved its purpose. The Arabs wrapped themselves up in their cloaks, and lay down to sleep off its effects. To make things easier for us, they entrusted their canoes to the custody of our own sentries !

At the chosen time my men embarked, without a hitch, in the silence only acquired by constant training. Two tugs, which had innocently been loading grain near by, slipped into midstream to tow our boats to the junction of marsh and river—for the distance was too great for the men, whose strength had to be saved for their long paddle through the marsh to the village of the Albu Aita. The towing was carried out without incident, and the long line of black canoes disappeared into the reeds.

Had our departure been remarked ? Would the news travel ahead of us in mysterious Eastern fashion, so that once more we should find our prey evading us ? Many times I asked myself those questions, as we glided silently between the tall reeds, and at last neared our destination.

Whatever guiding spirit ruled, the Bait Albu Aita had ordained that a group of night watchers should keep guard in each water-channel leading to their village. Rawdon had provided for this. Our long column paused a moment while the three leading boats went cautiously forward, and the curved daggers of my men quietly did their work.

There was more for congratulation in this than the mere efficient removal of a possible source of alarm : the watchers would not have been left to guard an empty village. We moved forward again, confident that this time our stratagem had succeeded, and that the Albu Aita were at last to be taught a real lesson.

Now came the most difficult part of the operations. Our forces had to separate in order to surround the village—a night manoeuvre

hard enough to achieve on *terra firma*, but many times less likely to succeed in this wilderness of reeds and baffling, intricate waterways. Rawdon and the boats detailed to go ahead left us, and in the lee of a tall clump of rushes my party was left to utter silence. I held my breath, it seemed, for hours. At last, from far ahead, came a shout—then a shot—another—and then a roar of musketry. Sharp jets of flame stabbed the darkness, and the sound of terror-stricken cries reached our ears.

Stumbling over reed-roots, falling headlong in the water, soaked and panting, we pressed forward to the attack. In one of those sudden and mysterious lulls which occur in warfare, we could now hear nothing but the rustling of our own bodies pressing through the reeds. Then the firing began again. What could be happening?

We reached at last the group of islands on which the village stood, and there, in the dim light of the false dawn, I could see Rawdon's thin form. He came to meet me.

'Just missed them!' he said. 'They have practically all got away, with that uncanny sense they have for making for the one gap in the ring. But it has been a good show—the most successful we have had. The beggars have got off with nothing but their lives: buffaloes, household goods, even canoes were all abandoned. Well, it's no use trying to follow them up. Get your men, Kirby, to make a systematic search for anyone bedridden, or for hiding children, before we set fire to the huts.'

'You know how they got away?' he said to me later. 'It was the merest chance. Some men of the Nawafil had come to steal a few of the Albu Aita's buffaloes, to remind them of an unsettled blood-feud, and it was they who ran into our advance party and gave the alarm. But for them, we might have had a hundred per cent. successful coup. As it is, what we have done would be more than enough to keep any ordinary tribe quiet for months.'

'Not the Albu Aita, sir,' I said gloomily.

'You are thinking of the Unknown Prophet,' answered Rawdon. 'We haven't settled with him yet; but I have a feeling that he won't escape me—nor I him. . . .'

The village presented a strange appearance. In every hut were to be seen the cooking-pots, the strip or two of carpet, the few miserable possessions which are all the marshman owns in the world; but no living soul was to be seen. Slow, ponderous water-

buffaloes came from the huts which they shared with their masters, and stood uncertainly about. On the shelving bank were drawn up a number of canoes, two or three floating loose just beyond them.

Was it my fancy, or did one of these move slowly, gradually away? Calling one of my men, I went out to investigate. In the drifting boat was a naked child, sound asleep. I stared down at it, baffled, but Husain was quicker at putting two and two together.

'The mother is never far from the child,' he muttered, and peered beneath the boat. 'By the All-Powerful, she is there!'

Under the canoe, which she clasped tightly as she swam on her back, was a marshwoman, no more than her nostrils above the water. Struggling and screaming, she was led off to Rawdon, before whom she became rigid with fear. All his questions elicited nothing but a blank stare of terror, until remembering King Solomon he tried a bluff.

'Kill the baby!'

'No, no! Spare him, for the sake of Ali!' cried the woman. 'I will tell all you ask.'

Her tongue thus loosed, she was promised a safe departure to seek her people, and Rawdon began a series of simple, reassuring questions as to her name, her tribe and so on.

At length, 'Is there a prophet among you?' he asked.

'Aye.'

'Can he bring the dead to life?'

'Aye, one Salih bin Mabrouk he brought to life. These eyes have seen it.'

'That's the yarn you heard,' said Rawdon rapidly to me. 'Is he with your tribe?' he continued.

'He left us three days since; and see the calamity that has befallen us because of his going!' and the woman began to weep afresh.

'His house—where is it?'

But she shivered and beat her breast, and would not say, until another threat, backed by the promise of a canoe-load of rice if she would lead us to the place, made her yield.

Taking the first boat to hand, we threaded our way among the islands of the village. Each was closely covered with the tunnel-shaped reed huts of the marsh Arabs, gleaming yellow in the morning sunlight. In the lee of each hut lay a pile of rolled mats ready for barter—now only more fuel for the coming conflagration.

At the extreme end of the village, our guide pointed out a solitary low island, crowned by a single hut.

We landed, and bending almost double went in at the low entrance. At first we could see nothing in the dim interior. Then, as our eyes grew used to the gloom, we made out a strange, squat pillar of dried mud in the centre of the floor. Of human habitation there was no sign but a bed of palm fronds in one corner, and on it a folded quilt. In the opposite corner, a hole had been dug in the ground, and beside it lay a pile of vitrified brick fragments, glazed dark green—the mounds of the marshes are full of such relics of ancient Babylonia.

With a muttered exclamation, Rawdon suddenly strode forward.

'More light!' he cried. 'Widen the doorway, one of you! By Gad, there is writing on it.'

He was staring at the pillar of mud. I joined him, as the crackling reeds of the doorway were torn down by our men, and daylight flooded into the hut. Together we bent down to decipher the inscription.

The writer had evidently used a pointed reed, before the mud set hard; several of his styles lay round about the base of the pillar. The letters were large and irregular, but legible, and the words were Turkish.

'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Compassioning!

'I was sent to these marshes to fulfil the task entrusted to me.

'By Schäfer's method I restored one of the people to life.

'That I might always remain with them, they put out my eyes.

'Now from the misery of blindness I make an escape.'

A last line of writing, at the base of the pillar, was illegible. Damp had caused the mud to crumble away, but a few letters, more deeply incised than the rest, could still be made out: . . . il al . . . tra.

'Schäfer's method?' I questioned, as we straightened our backs.

'Artificial respiration,' replied Rawdon briefly.

But there was still much that I did not understand. This man had been sent to the marshes—by whom? His was the brain behind the tribe's attacks on the river steamers, directing, controlling, co-ordinating. An act of benevolence had resulted in the wrecking of his plans; for to the marsh-folk he had become a

prophet, a god who could raise the dead, but who must be kept among them at all costs. Poor wretch!—I thought. But where was he now, and why did Rawdon's pale face look so strained?

'Well, they won't block the Narrows now!' I said, to cheer him up.

'No, and we might as well have stayed at home,' he replied in strangely bitter tones. 'I knew from the first, in my heart of hearts, that no good would come of this expedition. Let's get back, Kirby!'

Then, as though he felt my surprise at his vehemence, he added more quietly:

'I hate to see all their miserable Lares and Penates go up in flames. Let's get back to the river.'

We got into the canoe, and our four boatmen pushed off. The ground shelved rapidly, and almost at once they had to lay down their poles and take to paddling.

Rawdon leaned over the side.

'Deep water,' he said, 'but marvellously clear! I can see right down——' Suddenly his voice changed. 'Kirby—look!—Back the boat!' he added in Arabic to the men.

Before they could obey, a shot rang out. The canoe lurched violently, as each man seized his rifle and blazed back into the rushes; but a derisive cry, and the sound of a man crashing his way through the reeds growing ever fainter, showed that we had all missed our mark.

I turned to Rawdon. He was leaning sideways, and blood dripped through the fingers that clasped his forehead. With a horrified suspicion, I sprang to my feet in the swaying boat; but Husain was before me.

'A ransom for thee!' he said.

'Not dead?'

'A ransom for thee,' repeated he.

Half-dazed, I had the sense to make the boatmen return to the spot from which we had already drifted. Staring down in my turn into the water, I looked into the face of a drowned man.

And as I looked, some words of Rawdon's flashed into my memory. On my knees again before the half-obliterated inscription in the hut, I hardly needed the confirmation of those crumbling letters—il . . . al . . . tra.

'My time will have come,' Rawdon had said, 'when I meet Jamil al Atrachchi face to face.'

Jamil al Atrachi ! The Unknown Prophet and the German secret service agent were one and the same. Rawdon's strange superstition, then, had been justified. The revenge of an Albu Aita tribesman had found him out, at the moment of their meeting.

Chance, perhaps. It may have been ; but I am not sure. At last I understood his hesitation, his ill-concealed reluctance to attack the Albu Aita ; for though duty urged him on, in his heart he knew that death awaited him in the marsh.

Well, he was dead, and the Albu Aita were punished. The flames and smoke of their village were blackening the sky when I left the place with Rawdon's body. He had done what he set out to do ; but it was long before I could go into the marshes without hearing, in the murmur of reeds and water, his quiet, even voice saying ' I tell ye I *knew*.'

‘ . . . SINKETH TO ITS REST ’.

BY DOUGLAS V. DUFF.

I.

In the Palestine that is fast passing away before the march of Western progressiveness, there is, perhaps, no more majestic and tragic a figure than that of the *Ha Cohen Pasha*, the Hereditary High Priest of the once great Samaritan nation.¹ A tall, majestically bearded man, close on seventy years of age, whose face and figure bear little trace of that physical decadence which centuries of interbreeding have inflicted on the Samaritans. His voice is sharp and strong, his strength remains seemingly unimpaired, and the clear eye in that commanding face still retains its youthful fire. To see him arrayed in the sacred vestments of the High Priest of Israel, about to perform the Paschal sacrifice on Mount Gerizim, is to have a glimpse back through the ages to the far-off days when his people were a power in the world. He appears what he is, a worthy descendant of his mighty ancestors, and a fit ruler over this last pitiful fragment of a nation.

The last of the Samaritans live in a dark, airless ghetto buried deep in the labyrinthine mazes of the *sug* in the fanatically Moslem city of Nablus, built on the site of the Shechem of the Patriarchs. They are less than two hundred souls, all told, of which number less than seventy are adult males, and are all of an extremely decadent physical type. This decadence of theirs has been caused, principally, by many centuries of incessant interbreeding, and by massacres in ancient days, which killed off the strongest of the males. Their number has also been further depleted during the last two centuries, by many apostasies to Islam of men who became discouraged in the face of Moslem persecution, or broke the inflexible law of their nation and married Gentile women. The Samaritans count even the modern Jews as being outside the marriageable pale. The stern matrimonial law has now led to a state of affairs in which it is almost impossible for a man to be married until he is at least forty years of age, or more, and then they have to wed brides of scarcely eighteen.

The birth-rate is very low and the advent of children is an event celebrated by the whole community. The birth of a girl-child, in contrast with the sentiments of most Eastern peoples, is particu-

¹ The High Priest died last November, and was buried on Mount Gerizim.

larly noteworthy, there being an alarming paucity of females. As soon as a girl is born, arrangements are made for her betrothal and marriage. A list of the males is kept, and it is consulted to ascertain who is the senior eligible bachelor. The young man is, generally, about twenty to twenty-three years old. He is immediately affianced to the child, and has to bear himself, as patiently as possible, through the long years until his fiancée becomes of marriageable age.

This system brings its own retribution in its train. The men are long past their youthful vigour by the time that children are born. It must be remembered that an Oriental at forty is much older than a European of equivalent age, and the physique of each succeeding generation consequently suffers. Mentally, however, they are perhaps, the cleverest and most intellectual people in the Near East. Added to this there is the constant and pernicious interbreeding forced on them by the ever-narrowing circle from which couples are mated. As generation succeeds generation this circle grows ever less, and, in the not far distant future, this ancient nation will have cancelled itself out, and become a mere memory amongst the world's peoples.

The impending doom of their race is clearly reflected in the features of every Samaritan. They are thin and weakly, there is scarcely a man, bar, perhaps, the High Priest, of really robust physique amongst them. Their fine-drawn, ascetic features bear an air of infinite and brooding sadness, whilst to see the whole tiny community, gathered at some occasion of note such as the annual sacrifice on Gerizim, fills the beholder with a sentiment of hopeless sorrow for them in their fallen and ruined state.

Despite the small number of pure Samaritan extraction, who have remained true to the ancient observance, they have left an indelible trace on the speech, manners and characteristics of their neighbours. Throughout the whole of the Jebel Nablus, the ancient kingdom of Samaria, traces of the old blood are easy to find; there are mannerisms which point to an even older stock than the Samaritans; for instance: The *fellahin* of this area are still incapable of enunciating the Arabic letter *sheen*, using instead the simpler *seen*, they say for *El Sharq*, the East, '*el Sarg*,' for *El Shems*, the Sun, '*el Sems*,' and so forth. When one compares this with Judges xii. 6, and sees that the earlier inhabitants of this area, the Ephraimites, suffered under the same disability, and, even to save their lives when challenged by Jephthah's soldiers to say '*Shibboleth*,' could only pronounce '*Sibboleth*,' the comparison is obvious. But they are

also of a distinct physical type, differing widely in appearance from the other peasants of Palestine, so much so, that, to a trained eye, it is easy to pick out a *Nabulsi* among a number of Arabs from other areas. Many of the family names in this district also betray the Samaritan origin of some of the proudest Arab families, the Samara family, powerful in the western part of the Jebel, in the district known as the *Kudr el Beni Saab*, bear the colloquial equivalent for 'the Samaritan.'

There is a small synagogue belonging to the Samaritans in the heart of their ghetto, where, amongst other treasures, is preserved the oldest known existing copy of the Pentateuch. The nation has fallen on evil days since the close of the War, but it is very much to their credit that they have so far resisted all offers made by collectors and libraries for their treasure. The High Priest, however, despite fervent opposition from some of the more reactionary of his flock, believing that such a Book was the property of the whole world, has allowed it to be photographed and copies taken to the great museums of the West.

On one occasion, the writer, as was his custom, visited the High Priest at the house next to the Samaritan synagogue, when suddenly, apropos of nothing in the conversation, the venerable man said:

'I suppose that you look on the well at the junction of the Jiftlik road with the Jerusalem road as the real Well of Jacob?'

'It has been so venerated for centuries, your Eminence. I suppose it must be.'

'You will be surprised to learn that it is not the correct place at all. The true Well of Jacob, at which your Messiah, Isa ben Mariam, had his conversation with the Samaritan woman, is that close to the synagogue. It has been venerated by the Samaritans as the true site all through the ages. Listen, and I will tell you how the other well came to be accepted.'

'When the Empress Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine the Great, came to this land of Palestine, she built basilicas and churches over every place which she believed to be connected with some outstanding incident in the Messiah's life. She came to Nablus and sent for the then High Priest, and asked him to show her the Well of Jacob. He was afraid that if he showed the real place she would immediately build a church over it and that the Samaritans would be debarred from going there. Therefore he showed her the place over which she did, in fact, construct a Basilica, and which has ever since been venerated as the true Well. This is quite correct, as I can prove to you from our archives.'

'But, Your Eminence,' protested the writer, 'the fact that the Empress asked the High Priest the whereabouts of the Well proves nothing. He would have been the natural person for her to question.'

'I will leave all that aside, *ya ibni*, O my son,' answered the old man, speaking in the Arabic which is their usual language when speaking with Gentiles, 'I will prove that what I say is true in another way. I shall be glad to do this as you appear to be interested in us and often go out of your way to do us a service. When you next come to visit me, please bring a copy of your English Bible with you, and I will do my best to convince you.'

On the occasion, a fortnight or so later, of his next visit, the High Priest reverted to the subject. 'I see that you have brought your Bible. Good. I will now do my best to prove to you that, at least, our Well is a more likely site than the other more generally accepted.' He consulted a paper in his hand, on which he had made a list of quotations, chaptered and numbered in accordance with the Western Scriptures.

'You will admit,' said he, 'that there is, at least, a very ancient tradition that our father Jacob did make a well on the parcel of ground that he bought in this valley. This was believed by the woman of Samaria who figures in your Gospel, she speaks of the tradition in St. John iv. 5 and 6, 12. The details of the purchase of the land are laid down in Genesis xxxiii. 19. Now turn to Joshua xxiv. 32. There you will find that the bones of Joseph were buried in that same piece of ground. Both accounts agree that the land was close to the city of Shechem, which to-day is Nablus. From here it will take you nearly half an hour to walk to the so-called Jacob's Well. Is that not so? You agree? Now, remember also that Joseph as well as being one of the greatest statesmen in the world of his day, was also a great national hero, and would have been accorded a sepulchre of outstanding size and note. Add to this the fact that there have always been admirers of his in this city, whether they were Hebrews, Samaritans, Christians of the early centuries of your era, or Moslems, and that all of them would bear his tomb in reverence. His tomb still remains for all to see. Its location, seeing the reverence in which he has always been held, is not likely to have altered. If his bones had been moved there would be either a record or a legend of the transaction. Now, answer me, *ya ibni*,' he concluded, with a kindly twinkle of triumph in his eye. 'Where is the *Weli el Nebi Yussef*, the Tomb of Joseph, is it close to the well we maintain to be the correct site or is it near to your

Well of Jacob ? Almost next door to us, as you say. Finally you will admit that the wandering sheikh of nomads, who was our father Jacob, bought only a small portion of land, he did not purchase the entire valley, in that land was his well and in that land lie the bones of Joseph, his son. Do I prove my case ? Are you convinced ?'

The High Priest's presence always gives rise to the illusion that the slow drift of the centuries is a very trivial affair and one of merely ephemeral interest. A sense of agelessness and yet of profound antiquity steals over one whilst conversing with him. The days of Jeroboam, Ahab and Jezebel, of Jehu and Ben Hadad, King of Syria, the fire-brand Prophet Elijah (still revered by the Arabs as *El Khudr*, 'the Evergreen') and of Herod the Great, restorer of Samaria, all seem strangely near. One gets the impression that Samaria still stands, a mighty, noble city, with its Street of Columns, the vast amphitheatre, the marble palace of the Herods and the great statue of Augustus Cæsar supreme on its mountain-top a few miles away, and that the armed hosts of the Samaritans yet hold the balance of power between the hostile Empires of Babylon and Egypt, with ambassadors from both powers seeking his nation's support against the other. But it is an illusion only too rudely dispelled when one leaves him, and plunges once again into the darkness of the narrow pestilential streets of the *sug*, and away from the magnetism of his presence, realises to what depths this nation has fallen.

It is, however, at the annual ceremony of the sacrifice of the Paschal lambs on Mount Gerizim, that one sees the High Priest in all the glory of his office. There, in a barren field, separated by a dry-stone wall from the tumbled ruins of their Temple, built as a rival, by the ancient kings of his nation, to the great place of worship in Jerusalem, he stands. He, the last of the High Priests of Israel, the ruler of all that remains of the Ten Tribes, surrounded by the few survivors of the priestly clan, is about to offer sacrifice in the traditional manner of his fathers. This ceremony, which to the casual eye appears merely to be the butchery of a few sheep on a bleak hill-top, is the last vestige of that Temple worship of the Hebrews, which was the precursor of the varied ceremonies of the many Christian Churches.

All that is left of the Samaritan nation stands in three pitifully thin lines, on that wind-swept mountain summit. The rear line is composed of the women, and the young children who have not yet attained the *barmitzvah* ; in advance of them are the men, whilst in front of these are the few hereditary priests. In front of all,

aloof and grand in his isolation, stands the High Priest about to perform the ancient sacrifice.

Before their eyes lie the heaped, confused ruins of their Temple, a tumbled grey mass of weather-beaten stone, defaced and despoiled. Crusading, Roman and Saracen overlords have erected their fortifications here, rendering the original outlines of the building almost impossible to trace.

All around the Samaritans busy in their worship, kept back by native soldiers under a British officer, is a crowd of Moslem Arabs from Nablus and the surrounding districts, most of them, although they do not realise it, possessing a great admixture of Samaritan blood, howling and hooting and making the day one of high holiday. The worshippers pay no attention to them ; all that they are afraid of is that some Gentile might try to snatch some part of the sacrificial meat, as has happened in time past. This would be sacrilege of the most infuriating kind to them, as they are bound by the Divine mandate to see that no outsider should have any part in the sacrifice.

The ceremony proceeds, the Samaritans carry out the prayers and ritualistic movements as commanded in their ancient liturgy. The brisk breeze whips the smoke of the fire burning on the small altar of stones, constructed that morning, away to leeward. The huge flames in the fiery pit, in which the victims are to be roasted, rise high above the ground. The thin, high voices of the Samaritans drift eerily away along the slopes of their holy mountain. The merry bubbling of the water in the huge copper-cauldrons, drawn that morning from the wells under the Temple ruins, adds an undertone to the service.

But what a sight it is ! Here is the pitiful remnant of a great nation, carrying out the supreme act of their national worship amongst the ruins of their former grandeur. Carry its parallel to our own country and imagine the last two hundred Englishmen kneeling in prayer, the final Archbishop of Canterbury performing the ritual of the Church before the rubble-heap that was once Westminster Abbey, surrounded by a strange people who have become the inhabitants of Britain, a foreign officer ensuring that they shall be allowed to worship without sacrilegious interruption. An exactly similar situation, difficult as it may be to picture it.

After the sacrifice has been performed, whilst the victims are being roasted in the pit prepared for them, the High Priest holds a reception for the local notables. One cannot attend this reception without conjuring up in the mind's eye, what this ceremony must

have been of old, when Israel's High Priest gave audience to the great ones of the land and the glittering train of foreign ambassadors suing for his country's favour. Now, in a small collapsible wooden booth, the lineal descendant of those powerful priests receives a few Arab notables from the surrounding villages and a handful of commonplace, unimportant Government officials, such as the Area Officer and the local police superintendent, who, in their complacent self-conceit despise this representative of an ancient order, holding their little humdrum selves vastly superior to this old man, who is, after all, the last of Israel's ecclesiastical Princes.

It would be far better if, as the High Priest once said to the writer, all were finished with the Samaritans and the curtain rung down on their final appearance. That cannot be long now, and, above everyone, no one will be more pleased than their Hereditary ruler. In his own words: 'We mightily were, we yet pitifully remain, the future is not for us. Our day is done, our majesty gone, the sceptre has passed from our aged and nerveless fingers. There only remains the grave for Samaria, and then, forgetting our present feebleness, the nations will remember only our former grandeur, and the present will be as if it never was.'

II.

The tumbled fortifications of St. John of Acre, the vast, empty *khans* that were the monasteries and palaces of the Crusaders, the frowning Citadel with its massive keep, the tall, slender, heaven-pointing minaret of the great mosque of Jezzar the Butcher, with his bones encased in the marble sarcophagus of a general of Old Rome, nestling at its foot, all bear mute witness to the glory that was, when the city was the sea-gate of the Holy Land. The Hebrews never conquered it; it was a great city of the Phœnician kingdom; Cleopatra, Antony, Cæsar, Vespasian, Richard of England, St. Louis of France, Edward the First the 'Malleus Scotorum,' Bonaparte and a thousand other men, who have had their effect on world history, have lived near its walls. To-day is the fourth occasion on which the Red Cross of St. George of England has fluttered over its defences. The Lion-heart planted it there, the Marines, under Sir Sidney Smith, kept it flying against Napoleon, the guns of the British fleet drove the Egyptian conqueror from it in the early half of last century, whilst in 1918, its broad shadow once again fell athwart the ancient ramparts.

It is, however, a dying city, its population yearly grows smaller.

Haifa, its rival, across the Bay, is making giant progressive strides, and what was, forty years ago, a collection of miserable fishermen's hovels, bids fair to be the greatest port of the Levant, and has absorbed all Acre's sea-borne commerce. The great corn market and exchange is empty and deserted, and has become the playground for the urchins of the city. The harbour, with its ruined mole, ending in the famed Tower of Flies, lies sanded-up and useless except for the very smallest of coastal schooners; the wharves alongside which fleets of every nation have lain, are crumbling and falling into the water. The huge walls are badly undermined, the whole of the south-western angle has fallen into the sea, which now makes a clean breach almost up to the main street, whilst even the best-preserved portion, the north-western angle, the *Kala'at el Ingliz*, Castle of the English, is rapidly becoming unsafe.

In one of the *khans*, which was once a Benedictine Abbey, when the city was the last stronghold of the Latin Kingdom, there lie several old cannons, mouldering in a heap, bearing on their breeches the crest and names of several of our eighteenth-century ships-of-the-line, landed to assist Sir Sidney Smith in his defence against Bonaparte. Guns similar to those brought home by that hero, and to-day in the Tower of London as trophies, lie everywhere around the crumbling ramparts.

But it is in its population that Acre is unique. The percentage of Arab blood amongst the *Accawis* is very small. They are the descendants of all the races that have been at any time under the Ottoman dominion. The city was used as the fortress-prison of all the political prisoners, and undesirables of the Turkish Empire. They had the freedom of the city within the walls, but were forbidden to walk outside the single gate that penetrates the fortifications. From this strange swarm of Albanian, Armenian, Algerian, Arab, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Druze, Egyptian, Greek, Georgian, Jewish, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Negro, Persian, Serbian, Roumanian, Roumelian and Yemenite prisoners, doomed to spend their whole lives in the city, forced to make a home for themselves there, and freely intermarrying, the modern *Accawi* takes his descent. There is no stable type amongst them, they range from pseudo-Nordics, blond and ruddy-faced, to the darkest hues of Africa. In the arts of intrigue and that of making an easy living without the unpleasant necessity of having to work for it, they own no masters on earth.

But, far different from this swarm is the great *Sheikh el Mushiyek*,

the Sheikh of Sheikhs, Assad el Shukari, worthy representative of the virile creed of Islam. In his large house, close to the north-western breach in the walls, he is spending the evening of his days, far retired from the pomp and circumstance of the Imperial Court of the Sultan, or Ottoman camp, where the hey-day of his life was passed.

With his noble white beard, fierce, haughty, Semitic face, and clear eyes, Sheikh Assad makes a noteworthy figure in the picturesque black robes, and the snow-white *laffi*, binding his *tarbush*, of a Sheikh of Islam. He is of pure Arab blood, although all his life, until the expulsion of the Turk by Allenby's victorious troops, was spent in the close service of his Ottoman overlords. Well beloved he is by many, his renown for deeds of charity amongst the poor and necessitous well fits his proud title of *Sheikh el Mushiyek*. Many are the looks of deep and bitter hatred cast at him by some passing Arabs, who hold him responsible for the barbarous execution of their kindred by the stern and inflexible Turkish commander-in-chief, Jemaal Pasha, with whom Sheikh Assad was on terms of the closest intimacy and friendship, accompanying the Pasha throughout the whole of the recent campaign.

Well and loyally, with a fanatical religious zeal he served the Sultan, holding him to be the protector of Islam against the Frankish hordes, who were again threatening to overrun the Holy Land of Palestine. His greatest anger was directed against those of his own race who, impatient of the Turkish yoke, saw in an Infidel victory the surest hope of an independent Arab kingdom arising from the dust in which it had laid for centuries. With these young zealots, Sheikh Assad had no patience. Of far more importance to him was the great need of preserving the holy soil of the land from foreign, and infidel, dominion, and to this end he subordinated all personal feelings, showing no mercy to those who seemed bent on the overthrow of the Caliph's dominion.

He now lives, retired from all active participation in the conduct of affairs, accepting, with true Moslem stoicism, what is, to him, the will of Allah, in allowing the Franks to rule his beloved country, busying himself in praying for the day of deliverance. He takes no part whatsoever in local politics, although his name is still one of power amongst the *fellahin* and Bedouin, who, if he did but raise a finger, would follow this aged figure to the very gates of the tomb. Neglected by the higher officials of the Administration, not that the discourtesy of a few petty officials hurts the grand old man in the least, Sheikh Assad spends his last days in the semi-ruined and

crumbling city, which has this in common with him, that they can both dream of the brave days that were.

He has a tacit agreement with the Government to abstain from any interference with local politics, and he loyally keeps to the letter of the implied bond, but his kindly help, when, broken, exhausted, and wounded, some Arab, fresh from the fighting in Syria, would claim his help, will long be remembered by many. His distress at the ill-advised, badly planned, and abortive Rebellion of 1929, euphemistically called 'Riots,' was obvious to all, whilst the agony of his spirit on that fatal June day in 1930, when three young Arabs suffered death in the castle, a hundred yards from his house, for the crimes they had committed during the Rebellion, went far towards bowing those aged shoulders.

III.

His Beatitude of Antioch, Patriarch and Ruler of the Chaldean Syrians of the Jacobite Church in Palestine and Syria, is a worthy descendant of the great Satraps of his race, whom the King of Kings in Babylon once deputed to rule these same Provinces. The high nose, curved, but curiously unlike that of the Arabs, the full, square beard, a deep, rich chestnut in tone, combine, when he is vested in his pontifical robes of scarlet and gold, a richly brocaded hood drawn over his head, and the double-serpent staff of an Eastern Patriarch in his hand, to give the impression of a victorious general of ancient Babylon surveying a subject people.

The state of the Assyrians is almost as low as that of the Samaritans. Like them they are a lost nation, almost completely fallen into decay. The process is not quite so far advanced as with the latter people, but their end as a distinct national body is clearly in sight. There are a few thousands left around Mosul, dwelling near their spiritual capital, Deir el Bekhr, where their Hereditary Prince-Patriarch, Mar Shimun, holds undisputed sway over them, but in the Patriarchate of Antioch there are not more than a few hundred. They are all that remain of the far-flung colonies of Babylon; their Patriarch the last of the great Satraps.

In Jerusalem they have a few houses in the area between the Armenian and Jewish quarters, clustering around their monastery, built on the traditional site of the house of 'Mary the mother of Mark whose surname is John,' to which Simon Peter fled after having been delivered out of the prison of Herod. The local superior is a bishop, ably seconded by a zealous and wily old Archimandrite,

Abuna Yacoub by name. This latter is so aflame with zeal for the cause of his community that he is generally engaged in some conflict or trouble. He believes that, as the Syriac Church is, undoubtedly, the oldest of the Christian bodies, having been founded by James the Apostle, and was the original Church of Jerusalem referred to in the Acts, that they should be in full and exclusive possession of the Holy Places of Palestine, instead of being relegated, as they are, to dark holes and corners in these churches.

The Syriacs occupy a windowless, small, dark chapel in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, at the side of the great rotunda. It is the ante-chamber to the legendary tombs of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Their laity are allowed to occupy a frontage of ten feet, immediately in front of the chapel door, on the floor of the rotunda. None of their clergy, or Church servants, are allowed to stand on this patch, they must remain on the step leading into the chapel. Sturdy constables of the Palestine Police are posted here to enforce this custom, by direct action if necessary.

A dispute arose between the wealthy Armenian Convent and the Syriac Patriarch regarding the ownership of this chapel. The proof of ownership lay in some ancient oil-paintings that hang there, which bore Armenian superscriptions; they also claimed that the Syriacs were only allowed in the Basilica by privilege, and not by right, having been admitted, in company with the Copts, as protégés of the Armenians. This the Syriacs strenuously denied, and advanced the claim that there were also Syriac pictures of ancient date in the chapel, with inscriptions in Aramaic, their language, painted on them.

A small portion at a time, to-day a narrow strip, to-morrow a tiny patch, the canvas of the Armenian pictures began to disappear, especially those portions bearing any Armenian lettering. This continued until practically all the Armenian writing had gone. Every effort was made to detect the culprits. Monks watched the pictures, and the writer spent many weary and dusty hours, hidden in an old vestment-cupboard in the thickness of the wall, striving to discover the culprits by the light of a dim, low-hung sanctuary-lamp, suspended over the narrow entrance to the tombs. One day portions of the Syriac pictures also began to disappear; this raised the Archimandrite's blood to fever-heat. He had to be carefully watched whenever he entered the Basilica, as a direct physical assault on any Armenian cleric was well within the fiery old man's capacity.

The Armenians then desired to enclose their pictures in heavy

wooden frames under strong glass. The Syrians refused them permission either to remove the pictures, or to enter the chapel to carry out the work. An appeal was made to the Government, who, in the interest of peace, decided to carry out the work itself, making the frames and glass Government property, which no one would have the temerity to destroy. The Syrians again resisted and barred their chapel against the workmen. The writer was sent to the Basilica with a party of men to effect an entrance, by force if necessary, and to protect the carpenters. On arrival of the armed party, the Patriarch, who was visiting Jerusalem at the time, and the wily old Archimandrite were found to be present and protested against the Government's action. His Beatitude was assured that his protest would be registered and forwarded to the proper quarter. Abuna Yacoub, however, evidently purposed active resistance, and an ugly situation seemed imminent.

Approaching the Patriarch, the writer spoke to him in the Arabic which the Syrians use to outsiders, although speaking Syro-Chaldean Aramaic, the language of New Testament times, amongst themselves.

'*Ya Sidna el Batrarch*, Your Beatitude, why not claim that the Syriac pictures should also be covered by the Government? You will not be refused. When this is done the other side will not be able to twist this day's work into a precedent on which to base further claims to the chapel. Send a runner to the District Commissioner saying that you will submit if your pictures are also glazed. I will take no action until his answer arrives.'

Fortunately the Patriarch agreed, the required order arrived immediately, and the situation soon became seemingly calm again. The bad feeling between the two communities, however, persisted and, with the approach of Holy Week, anxiety was felt by the authorities on their account. The writer visited the Patriarch on several occasions and impressed on him the absolute necessity of maintaining peace and dignity during the forthcoming ceremonial season. The last interview was particularly noteworthy.

Arriving at the low, iron-studded door of the Syriac Monastery, in the street running to the Zion Gate, he was admitted by a *kawass*, clad in all the glory of blue, gold-embroidered Zouave jacket and pantaloons, a huge, curved Eastern sword, cross-hilted and silver scabbarded, suspended by scarlet silken cords at his side and a five-foot, silver-headed mace in his hand. His gorgeous guide conducted him past the door of the church, in which hangs a portrait of the

Virgin ascribed to St. Luke the Evangelist, built over the site of the house which sheltered the first Christian church, and up the external stone stairs to the throne-room, where he took a seat and awaited the arrival of the Patriarch.

The prelate entered, tall, erect, not more than fifty years of age, the dark beard covering the gold chain and medallion of a bishop. On his head was the peculiar Syriac cap, believed to be a relic of ancient Babylonia, the shape of the dome on a Russian church. A peculiar flap is attached to this cap, fitting closely to, and completely covering, the nape of the neck. After bowing gravely to his visitor, a salutation returned with equal gravity, he took his seat on the high throne-like chair in the corner of the room. Courtesies of a conventional kind were exchanged until coffee and sweetmeats, brought in by a novice, under the escort of the redoubtable Archimandrite had been consumed. The serious business of the audience then commenced.

'Your Beatitude, the Government wish to have your assurance that all will pass off peaceably in the Holy Sepulchre, especially during the Festival of the Holy Fire. May I have Your Beatitude's word that this will be so?'

'My people are mightily incensed against the Armenian clergy,' he replied, 'but they dare not disobey my orders. The Syrians will never cause wanton trouble in the Church of the Lord's death. You may tell the Government that there will be no trouble on our part.'

'Not unless,' broke in Abuna Yacoub, his old eyes seeming to flash as he spoke, 'the rights of our nation are trampled upon. If that happens every Syriac will die in the defence of our rights.'

This sounded distinctly ominous as the Archimandrite had what appeared to others to be exaggerated views of his community's rights, but the Patriarch interrupted him.

'And not even then, Archimandrite,' he said, coldly. 'It is better that we should lose all our rights than incur such scandal.'

'Our fathers would not have spoken so,' muttered the irrepressible old man. 'They would have died before they would have surrendered one small piece of our nation's rights. But we will not start any fight, as His Beatitude says, but anyone who dares to try and trample on us had best beware.'

The writer returned to report that trouble was quite likely. Knowing his Abuna Yacoub fairly well he could not imagine him submitting to any indignity, either real or fancied.

A few days later the ceremony of the Holy Fire was drawing to a close. The thousands of people in the Basilica had seen the 'miraculous' fire appear at the portholes in the Holy Sepulchre *Ædicule*. The Fire had been distributed amongst the different sects with not more trouble than was usual, and everything appeared to be progressing peaceably. So much was this the case that, as soon as the Orthodox Greek ceremonies were over, most of the senior officers had withdrawn, leaving the writer to attend to the Armenian, Coptic, and Syriac services and processions. These processions pass three times around the *Ædicule*, the Armenians leading, followed by the Copts, whilst the Syriacs bring up the rear. So many are the clerics and acolytes in these processions that the head of the Armenian party is rammed against the end of the Syriacs, the least responsible Armenians leading their section being in contact with the Syriac Patriarch, in the place of honour of his cortège. This was obviously the danger-point.

As soon as three circuits are completed the Armenians halt, and occupy the front of the *Ædicule*, holding a brief service there. As soon as they have finished, they move off and are succeeded by the Copts, the Syriacs moving up to the place vacated by the Copts. The Armenians then walk completely round the *Ædicule* again and exeunt through the pillars of the great rotunda, to their sacristy. On this occasion the head of the Armenian procession, on the conclusion of the service, commenced to move rapidly, clashing against the Syriac tail, before the latter had had a chance to move, being prevented by the Copts in front of them, who in turn could not move until the Armenians were clear. The Syriac Patriarch, on his gilded throne, was sitting in the narrow gangway between the Coptic chapel at one end of the *Ædicule* and the main wall of the Basilica, completely blocking the passage.

Infuriated by the delay, caused by the presence of this throne, one of the Armenians, a layman, pushed forward, and, grasping the Patriarchal throne, spilled the last of the Satraps on to the filthy flags of the Basilica floor. Roaring like a bull, every hair standing erect, Abuna Yacoub led the Syriacs to battle in the defence of their Patriarch. Armenians and Syriacs rushed at each other and a grim struggle commenced. The thousands of spectators, mainly women, became panic-stricken, and started a maddened rush for the only door. There was the gravest danger that many of them would be trampled to death in the confusion; if anyone slipped on the stone floor it was unlikely that they would ever rise

again. Curzon in his book, *The Monasteries of the Levant*, describes just such a panic, in 1885, at this same Festival of the Holy Fire, after which he counted several hundred corpses of persons trampled to death, laid out in rows on the parvis of the Sepulchre.

Quickly sending some of his men to stem the rush, the writer collected the remainder and plunged into the fray. He found the Patriarch still lying on the floor, Abuna Yacoub bestriding his recumbent body, and apparently gone baresark, the staff of a processional banner in his hand. Heaving, thrusting, pushing, trampling, the trouble was gradually got under control and a number of clerics and laymen, on both sides, despatched under escort to the Barracks at the Citadel, led by the redoubtable Abuna Yacoub. They were given a short period to simmer down in the guard-room and then released to return to their respective monasteries.

All very distressing to our Western point of view, this squabbling of some Oriental ecclesiastics in the Holy Places of Christendom, yet it does show the militant spirit of these ancient creeds, the readiness to sacrifice everything to what they consider to be their rights. The Assyrians in Mosul, the same people as these, are reckoned amongst the finest fighting-men in Asia ; almost all of them serve in the Iraqi army. Their nation is a ruin fast hastening to decay ; their language an anachronism, rapidly being forgotten by the rising generation, who seem careless of the ancient traditions of their race ; their great cities merely memories, but the old courageous fighting spirit which made their fathers of Babylon the masters of the known world, burns as brightly as ever it did, their national pride is as undimmed as when Belshazzar first mounted his throne.

The nation is typified in its ruler, the Patriarch of Antioch. Proud of blood, conscious of the ancientness of his descent, courageous, noble in his outlook, he faces the world proudly and without subservience to the upstart nations of the West, who now fill the rôle of his fathers. He does not make it too obvious, but the indomitable pride of the man, with one hundred and fifty generations of ancestors, all of whom he can mention by name, shows at times when he is treating with those whom he secretly considers vastly his inferiors, being of a newer breed than his. But an occasional look of infinite sadness betrays the fact that he knows that he is practically the last of the native rulers of his people, and that the power he wields over a few hundred depressed people is the merest travesty of what once was.

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

A LITERARY Acrostic is published every month, and the Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers two prizes to the most successful solvers. The winners will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. If several solvers send solutions of equal merit, the two whose answers are opened first will win the prizes.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 115.

'Better not be at all
Than not be ——.'

'Howe'er you babble, great —— cannot die.'

'To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of —— ———.'

1. 'I make the —— sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.'
2. 'Peace sitting under her ——.'
3. 'And sometimes through the mirror ——
The knights come riding two and two.'
4. 'Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by —— as thou by sea.'
5. 'One praised her ancles, one her ——,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.'

This acrostic is taken entirely from Tennyson's Poems.

RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page i in the preliminary pages of this issue : and he must be careful to give also his real name and address.
4. Solvers should not write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
5. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
6. Answers to Acrostic No. 115 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50, Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and must arrive not later than March 20. No answers will be opened before this date.

ANSWER TO NO. 114.

- | | | | |
|----|---|--------|---|
| 1. | H | esperu | S |
| 2. | E | yebro | W |
| 3. | A | x | E |
| 4. | R | is | E |
| 5. | D | epar | T |

PROEM : Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.

LIGHTS :

1. Longfellow, *The Wreck of the Hesperus*.
2. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ii, 7.
3. Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome*. Horatius, xxxiv.
4. Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, i.
5. Kipling, *The Five Nations, Recessional*.

Acrostic No. 113 ('Whole World') : The prizes are won by Miss Muriel Boothe-way, The Old Rectory, Oswaldtwistle, Lanes., and Miss F. Sheppard, Badgeworth Manor, near Cheltenham, whose answers were the first correct ones opened. These two solvers will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

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